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Philosophical Classics for English Readers

EDITED BY

WILLIAM KNIGHT, LL.D.
PROFESSOR OF MORAL PHILOSOPHY, UNIVERSITY OF ST ANDREWS

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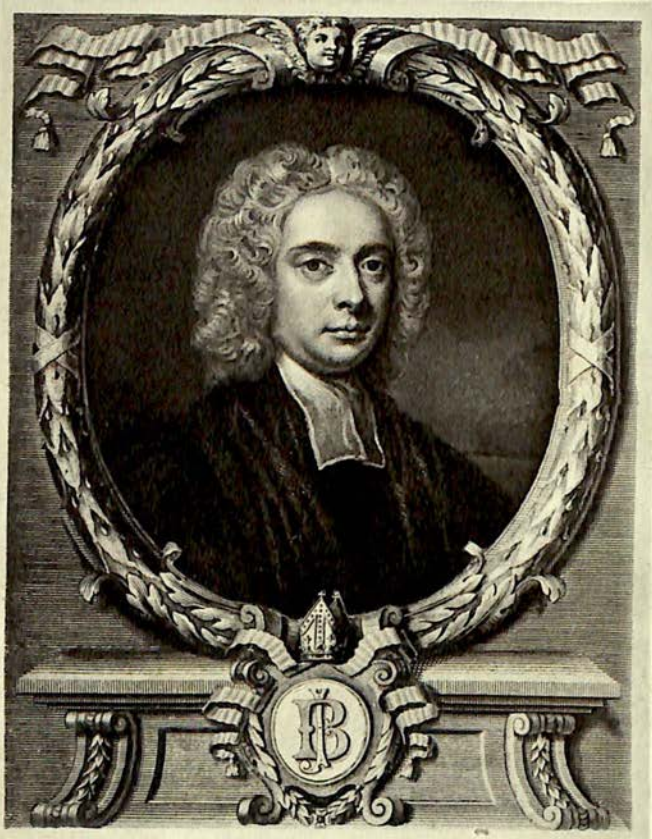

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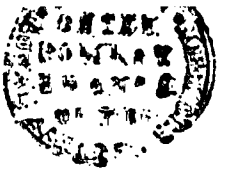

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BUTLER.

CHAPTER I.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTICE.

Joseph Butler was born at Wantage in 1692. His father was a prosperous linen and woollen draper, who had retired from business to a house known as the Priory, still standing on the outskirts of the town. Though it has undergone many modern alterations, having been occupied for several years as a school, and now as the residence of the curates of the parish, the room is still shown in which the great writer was born. He received his early education under the Rev. Philip Barton, a clergyman of the Church of England, master of the 'Latin' School, held at that time in an Elizabethan building which had replaced the small Norman church, standing in Leland's days side by side with the present church,—a curious instance, as the old antiquary remarks, of 'two churches in one churchyard.' The whole has since been pulled down, and the old Nor-

man porch, which had still survived, has been transferred to the new school buildings in another part of the town. To the training of his first teacher the future bishop must have attached some value, as one of his first acts, as soon as such preferment lay in his power, was to appoint Mr Barton to a comfortable rectory. But Mr Butler, the father, was a Presbyterian, and his wish was to bring up Joseph, his youngest son, to the Presbyterian ministry. With this view he removed him to a Dissenting academy of considerable repute, kept by Mr Samuel Jones, first at Gloucester, and afterwards at Tewkesbury. At this latter place young Butler was associated with some schoolfellows whose distinction in after-life would seem to show that their teacher was a man of more than ordinary ability. Thomas Secker, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury; Isaac Maddox, Bishop of Worcester; Samuel Chandler, an able Nonconformist divine; Dr Nathaniel Lardner; and John (Lord) Bowes, who became Lord Chancellor of Ireland,—were all at some time or other his fellow-pupils. There must have been something in the training which Butler received under his Nonconformist tutor that rose above the narrowness of sectarianism; and it would be highly interesting, if it were possible, to know what was the course of reading and what the system of instruction which led to such remarkable results in the case of some of his pupils. All we do know is that in November 1713 young Butler —who, although in his twenty-second year, was still a student at Tewkesbury—wrote the first of those remarkable letters to Dr Samuel Clarke of Norwich, the scholar of Newton, and the ablest metaphysician of the time,

which are now printed in most editions of his works. He had been much struck with Clarke's recent publication, 'A Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God.' Such demonstrative proof the young student had, as he tells Dr Clarke, been long seeking in vain. 'I have made it my business,' he says in this letter, 'ever since I thought myself capable of such sort of reasoning, to prove to myself the being and attributes of God:' surely a very remarkable declaration—and its honesty cannot be doubted—to come from so young a man. But 'though he had got very probable arguments, yet he could go but a very little way with demonstration in the proof of those things;' and he was not altogether satisfied with Clarke's method of reasoning. He put forward with great acuteness, and at the same time with great modesty, two distinct objections which had struck him in reading the book, first to Clarke's proof of 'the infinity or omnipresence' of the self-existing Being, and secondly to his proof that such Being 'must of necessity be one.' Although these objections have been held by Sir J. Mackintosh and other metaphysical writers to be unanswerable, Butler himself withdrew the first of them in his fourth letter, and (as will be seen) in a subsequent correspondence with Clarke professed himself fully satisfied as to the second.[1] So that they were not withdrawn, as some of his biographers have imagined, out of his modesty as a young man, but simply because he considered them untenable; and whatever may be their real value as against Clarke, we may dismiss them altogether in considering Butler's own views, as not approved by his maturer judgment.

[1] See also Analogy, Pt. I. ch. vi.

The young student was very modest in the conduct of this early correspondence. He not only withheld his name—writing under the signature of 'A Gentleman in Gloucestershire'—but deputed his friend Secker to carry the letters to and from the Tewkesbury post-office, where, no doubt, in those days of unfrequent correspondence, the few letters despatched and received by the members of Mr Jones's academy were likely to undergo some amount of curious scrutiny.

He very early formed the intention of conforming to the Church. Such intention was naturally far from agreeable to his father's views; and a kind of conference of Presbyterian divines was gathered in order to deal with young Joseph. But their arguments had little effect, and Mr Butler the elder very sensibly gave way, and allowed his son to enter at Oriel College, Oxford, in March 1714. There he made an acquaintance which had much influence on his future career. He became the intimate friend of Edward Talbot, whose father was then bishop of Salisbury, and afterwards of Durham. Talbot, who became subsequently fellow of the college, was a young man of high promise and somewhat enthusiastic temperament; he was at one time a member of the little 'Society for Promoting Primitive Christianity,' set on foot by the well-known William Whiston, whose fanatical vagaries ended at last in confirmed insanity. But the Oxford of those days was on the whole a great disappointment to the earnest young student. He appears to have kept up a correspondence with Dr Clarke, who had become rector of St James's, Westminster, and a few of the letters, now written under his proper name, have been preserved. One of these is

a reply to some communication from Clarke, of which he says[1]—

'It revived in my mind some very melancholy thoughts I had upon my being obliged to quit those studies which have a direct tendency to divinity, that being what I should choose for the business of my life: it being, I think, of all other studies the most suited to a reasonable nature. I say my being obliged; for there is very little encouragement[2] (whether one regards interest or usefulness) nowadays for any one to enter that profession who has not got a way of commanding his assent to received opinions without examination.'

In a subsequent letter (Sept. 30, 1717) he announces his intention of migrating to Cambridge in order to take his degree in law, a step to which he had now received his father's consent, and asks Clarke to recommend him a tutor there: at the same time strongly expressing his disgust at the formal routine of the Oxford schools.[3]

'We are obliged to misspend so much time here in attending frivolous lectures and unintelligible disputations, that I am quite tired out with such a disagreeable way of trifling; so that if I can't be excused from these things at Cambridge, I shall only just keep one term there.'

He 'will beg leave to trouble Dr Clarke with a difficulty in relation to Freedom, which very much perplexes

[1] A copy of this letter is in the library of the British Museum: it is printed in Steere's Unpublished Remains of Bishop Butler, p. 12. It bears no date, but was written soon after he left Gloucester.

[2] The printed copy has '*every* encouragement;' but in the MS., probably in the handwriting of Dr Birch, the word is 'very,' and the context leaves no doubt that the word 'little' has been omitted.

[3] European Magazine, Jan. 1802, p. 9.

him,' and as to which he can get no help where he is—'Our people here have never had any doubt in their lives concerning a received opinion, so that I cannot mention a difficulty to them.'

'I see great reason to be satisfied that freedom and action are identical ideas, and that man is, properly speaking, an agent or free being. But as the question concerning freedom is or is not of consequence just as it affects the purposes of religion, my not being able clearly to make out how freedom renders us capable of moral government perplexes me as much as though I was in doubt concerning freedom itself. I am satisfied it is in our power *to act or not to act* in any given case: yet I do not see that it follows from thence that it is in our power to act virtuously, because the physical and the moral nature come under quite two different considerations. Virtue does not consist barely in acting, but in acting upon such motives and to such ends: and acting upon such motives, &c., evidently supposes a disposition in our nature to be influenced by those motives; which disposition, not being in action, does not depend upon us, but, like the rest of our affections, seems to depend upon our original frame and constitution.'

He takes, as an instance, alms-giving to the poor: it has not the character of a virtuous action, unless done from a motive of duty. He sees it quite within his own power to do the *physical* action, but not the *moral* action, unless he has 'a disposition in his nature to be influenced by this motive;' and therefore

'This disposition may be considered as a *sine qua non* to the performance of every duty. Now that we have not this disposition when we neglect our duty is evident from this—that, if we had it, we should always certainly (though not necessarily) do our duty. How then can we be accountable for neglecting the practice of any virtue, when at what time

soever we did neglect it, we wanted that was a *sine quâ non*, or absolutely necessary to the performance of it—viz., a disposition to be influenced by the proper motive? . . . Upon the whole, such is the imperfection of our nature, that it seems impossible for us to perform any one more virtuous action than we do perform.'

Yet, he continues, he is 'conscious of somewhat in himself, and can discern the same in others, which seems directly to contradict such objections,' though he 'cannot see where the weakness in them lies.'

In the answer jotted down on the back of this letter, Clarke admits that 'a disposition to be influenced by right motives *is* a *sine quâ non* to virtuous actions:' such a disposition is invariable only in the case of the Deity himself: but men, as rational beings, are not without such disposition, if they will only follow it.

Butler carries on the argument in a third letter:[1]—

'I do indeed think that no rational creature is, strictly speaking, indifferent to right motives, but yet there is something which to all intents of the present question is the same, —viz., a stronger disposition to be influenced by contrary or wrong motives: and this I take always to be the case when any vice is committed.'

And he thinks Clarke has omitted this consideration, —of the worse principle being the stronger. To which Clarke again jots down a rough copy of a reply: he will not admit that 'there can be such a thing naturally in rational creatures as a disposition to be influenced by wrong motives:' but the disposition to be influenced by right motives may be neutralised by a 'perverseness

1 Steere's Remains of Bp. Butler, p. 13.

of will:' 'the liberty of the will forcibly overrules the disposition to the right.'

Butler agrees with this view in his next letter; in which he also says he is '*now* fully satisfied' with Clarke's argument for the unity of the divine nature, which he did not see at the time he was writing on that subject.[1]

It will be seen how little this acquiescence in 'received opinions,' which he found the rule at Oxford, was in accordance with Butler's disposition. In the last of these letters which have been preserved,[2] he still cherishes the idea of going to Cambridge at once, if he can get the terms already kept by him at Oxford allowed at the sister university, of which, however, he understands there is some doubt. In that case he proposes to remain at Oriel until he has taken his degree as Bachelor of Arts, and then proceed to Cambridge to take his degrees in Law. It seems probable that at this time he had not made up his mind as to his future profession.

The contemplated migration to Cambridge never took place. His friend Talbot entered into holy orders about this time, and was very soon (in 1717) appointed to the rectory of East Hendred, near Butler's native town. Butler must have been ordained in the same year, and either acted as Talbot's curate or assisted him occasionally in his parish duties, as his signature appears in the

[1] Steere's Remains of Bp. Butler, p. 17.

[2] Brit. Museum, Add. MSS. 12, 101. Printed in the European Magazine, Feb. 1802, and in Steere's Remains, p. 17. Clarke had intended these letters for publication, as on the back of this he has noted—'These are to be added to the next edition of Leibnitz's letters.'

registers of baptisms and burials at East Hendred during the first few months of his friend's incumbency. In the following year, though he was only twenty-six, the joint influence of Talbot and Clarke obtained for him the appointment of Preacher at the Rolls Chapel,—no great preferment (in fact the stipend was so poor that his eldest brother had to supply him with money), but still a distinguished position for so young a man. Two years afterwards, Edward Talbot, who had become Archdeacon of Berks, died at the early age of twenty-nine, recommending earnestly his friends Butler and Secker to the kind offices of his father; and the bishop, on his translation to the see of Durham next year, at once presented Butler (who had only just taken his first degree of B.C.L.) to the rectory of Haughton-le-Skerne, near Darlington. Secker, like his old schoolfellow, had originally been intended for the Nonconformist ministry, but he too had changed his views, and had gone from Gloucester to Paris to study medicine. His opinions in early life seem to have been very unsettled, and he is said at one time to have presided at a club of Free-thinkers. But he had kept up a correspondence with Butler, who had spoken warmly of him to Edward Talbot; and, probably by their advice, he had entered at Oxford, and, as was easy enough in those days, obtained a degree at once. Bishop Talbot ordained him, and gave him the living of Houghton-le-Spring. He appears to have been very grateful to Butler, and took an early opportunity of repaying his good offices. Butler's strong taste for building, which he was enabled to indulge safely in later life as bishop of Bristol and of Durham, threatened to involve him in difficulties at

Haughton, where he was preparing to rebuild the dilapidated parsonage. Secker feared that his unpractical friend would ruin himself, and obtained for him from Bishop Talbot the presentation to the richer living of Stanhope in Weardale, known in the north as 'the golden rectory.' Thither he removed in 1725, and now for the first time found himself able to live without pecuniary assistance from his brother, who appears to have been very liberal to him. The last entry of that kind in his memoranda is the receipt of £100 in January of that year.

He had hitherto retained his preachership at the Rolls Chapel, and seems to have divided his time between London and his country parish. These changes of residence were somewhat sudden, if an anecdote commonly told of him be true. It is said that he would remark casually to his servant, 'John, it is time you and I were moving northwards'—which was well understood by the recipient of the hint as an order to have the horses at the door next morning. Of his life and habits as rector of Stanhope almost nothing is known. Bishop Philpotts, who succeeded him in the rectory after an interval of eighty years, and tried to collect some local traditions of him, could only gather that his kindness of heart won for him the affection and respect of his parishioners; that he was so little able to resist the appeal of a beggar, and yet so averse to indiscriminate alms-giving, that he used to run away from such an applicant and shut himself up in his house; and that 'he rode a black pony, and rode very fast.' Sometimes, however, it is said that the pony was seen quietly grazing on the hillsides or in the lanes, while the rider sat with loose rein absorbed

in meditation. But a recent inquirer, who appears to have spared no pains in his researches on the spot, found the actual traces of Butler's residence at Stanhope scanty in the extreme. The rectory-house in which he lived has been replaced by a more modern one; the church has lately been restored. A sun-dial now on the south wall of the chancel, removed from the south porch, where it was set up during Butler's incumbency, bears an inscription probably of his suggestion—'*Ut hora sic vita.*' And in an old book of church accounts, still known as 'Butler's book,' and containing many entries in his hand, there is one brief record of some interest: 'I leave to the Parsonage the following things belonging to the little Oratory—a brass lock and spring to the door, a branch candlestick, two large candlesticks, three mahogany seats.—Jo. Butler.'[1] The existence of this 'little oratory' at Stanhope rectory perhaps gave some colour to the charge subsequently brought against him of a leaning towards Rome.

The year after his induction to Stanhope (1726) he resigned his preachership in London, and at the same time published his celebrated fifteen sermons preached there, which he dedicated to Sir Joseph Jekyll, Master of the Rolls. These were, of course, only a small selection from those he had delivered during his eight years tenure of the appointment; and he says himself, in his preface, that this selection was 'in a great measure accidental.' The rest of the series were probably burnt amongst his other papers in accordance with the directions in his will; and perhaps the substance of them had been worked up into his later publication, the

[1] See 'Stanhope Memorials of Butler,' by W. M. Egglestone

'Analogy.'[1] The preparation of this work was the chief occupation of the next seven years of his life, which were spent entirely at Stanhope.

His life there must have seemed very secluded to one who had so long enjoyed the opportunities of intellectual society in London, and it was probably not without its effect on Butler's somewhat melancholy temperament. Secker, at any rate, seems to have feared this, and was generously anxious that his friend's great abilities should find wider and more congenial sphere. He had been appointed one of the royal chaplains, and after a sermon delivered at Court, was honoured with a long conversation by Queen Caroline, who very much affected theology. He took the opportunity of speaking to her Majesty about the late preacher at the Rolls, with whose reputation at least she seems to have been already acquainted, for she replied that she 'thought Mr Butler had been dead.' When she asked the question subsequently of Archdeacon Blackburne, he replied, 'No, madam, he is not dead,—but he is buried.' Secker's mention of his friend to the Queen had no result at the time: but he had sufficient influence with Bishop Talbot to get Butler appointed chaplain to the bishop's brother, then Lord Chancellor, by whom, three years afterwards, he was made a prebendary of Rochester; and the Queen, in the same year, made him Clerk of the Closet. She soon became much interested in him,

[1] About the close of the last century, some one discovered the wife of a country rector in the act of destroying, for culinary purposes, the last remnant of a box of sermons which seemed to have been written by Joseph Butler. The lady was reproved, but the exculpatory rejoinder was—'Why, the box was full once, and I thought they were my husband's!' Bagehot's Literary Studies, vol. ii. p. 54.

and commanded his regular attendance at the little private supper-parties at which she loved to gather round her some of the fashionable divines of the day for theological debate. Butler's old correspondent Dr Clarke, who had once taken part in these debates, had just died: but Hoadley, Sherlock, and Secker were still amongst the invited guests on these occasions, and it was the delight of the Queen to listen to their disputes on theology and metaphysics, and to flatter herself that she understood them. Mr Pattison, in his essay 'On the Tendencies of Religious Thought,' suggests that possibly these discussions, 'where such topics were canvassed with earnestness and freedom, and he must often have felt the impotence of reply in detail,' first set him upon the preparation of a methodical defence of Christianity. Of this he finds some evidence in a passage in Butler's Durham Charge, where the bishop says:—

'The general evidence of religion is complex and various. It consists of a long series of things, one preparatory to and confirming another, from the very beginning of the world to the present time. And it is easy to see how impossible it must be, in a cursory conversation, to unite all this into one argument, and represent it as it ought: and could it be done, how utterly indisposed people would be to attend to it,—I say, in a cursory conversation: whereas unconnected objections are thrown out in a few words, and are easily apprehended, without more attention than is usual in common talk. So that, notwithstanding we have the best cause in the world, and though a man were very capable of defending it, yet I know not why he should be forward to undertake it upon so great a disadvantage, and to so little good effect, as it must be done amidst the gaiety and carelessness of common conversation.'

This suggestion receives some further confirmation from a passage in the 'Analogy.'

'It is obvious how much advantage the nature of this evidence gives to those persons who attack Christianity, especially in conversation. For it is easy to show, in a short and lively manner, that such and such things are liable to objection, that this and another thing is of little weight in itself; but impossible to show, in like manner, the united force of the whole argument in one view.'—Anal., Pt. II. ch. vii.

It seems not improbable (indeed his style very much favours the impression) that Butler's thoughts and words did not flow so readily in conversational argument as those of less able men.

It was in this year (1736) that Butler gave to the press his great work—great in matter, though contained within very moderate compass—'The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature.' It seems to have at once attracted more general attention than the sermons, though these had doubtless prepared the way for its appreciation. But an amusing story is told of its reception by the author's own family. He had presented a copy to each of his nephews at Wantage.

'One of these, John, a wealthy and eccentric bachelor, who had more taste for practical mechanics than for metaphysical research, appeared to attach but little value to his uncle's production. Having occasion to borrow an iron vice of his neighbour Mr Thompson, a shrewd and sensible Scotch solicitor, who spoke in high terms of the "Analogy," and expressed great respect for the author, John Butler proposed that as Mr Thompson liked the "Analogy," and he himself

liked the iron vice, they should make an exchange. To this Mr Thompson cheerfully assented, and John Butler left him highly pleased, and thinking that he had turned his uncle's present to an excellent account. [1]

Butler presented a copy of his work, as in duty bound, to Queen Caroline, and her Majesty appears to have read it with great interest, whether she was able to follow its close argument or not. Lord Bolingbroke has noticed this,—not without a sneer, as might be expected.

'She studies with much application the "Analogy of Revealed Religion to the Constitution and Course of Nature." She understands the whole argument perfectly, and concludes with the Right Rev. author "that it is not so clear a case that there is nothing in revealed religion." Such royal, such lucrative encouragement, must needs keep both metaphysics and the sublimest theology in credit.' [2]

Bolingbroke was wrong on one point: the author was never 'Right Rev.' during Queen Caroline's life. She died in the year following the publication of the book, and Butler was not appointed to the see of Bristol till nearly a year after her death. She received her last Communion from his hands, and made his preferment one of her last requests to the King. A month after her death he preached before his Majesty, by special command, in the Princess Amelia's apartment. 'He preached upon the subject of being bettered by afflictions, which affected his Majesty so much that he desired the sermon, and assured him that he would do something

[1] Bartlett's Life of Bp. Butler, p. 95.
[2] Philosophical Works, vol. i. p. 123 (edit. 1754).

very good for him.' Such is the memorandum made by Dr Thomas Wilson (son of the well-known bishop) in his diary. He says that he received the account from Sir J. Jekyll, Master of the Rolls, 'who desired that it might be known publicly: it was told him by the bishop of Oxford (Secker).' Butler had a powerful friend also in Lord Chancellor Talbot, and in August 1738 he received from Sir Robert Walpole, then Prime Minister, the offer of the see of Bristol. It was a very poor preferment—the worst endowed of the English bishopries, its revenue not amounting at that time to more than £500 (some authorities say £400) a-year; and Butler had perhaps a right to expect, from the King's warm professions, some more substantial mark of royal favour. He certainly did expect it; and probably a more singular letter was never penned in reply to the offer of a mitre, than that in which he conveyed his acceptance to the minister.

'STANHOPE, *Aug.* 28, 1738.

SIR,—I received yesterday from your own hand (an honour which I ought very particularly to acknowledge) the information that the King had nominated me to the bishopric of Bristol. I most truly think myself very highly obliged to his Majesty, as much, all things considered, as any subject in his dominions; for I know no greater obligation than to find the Queen's condescending goodness and kind intentions towards me transferred to his Majesty. Nor is it possible, while I live, to be without the most grateful sense of his favour towards me, whether the effects of it be greater or less; for this must in some measure depend upon accidents. Indeed, the bishopric of Bristol is not very suitable either to the condition of my fortune or the circumstances of my preferment; nor, as I should have thought,

answerable to the recommendation with which I was honoured. But you will excuse me, sir, if I think of this last with greater sensibility than the conduct of affairs will admit of.

'But, without entering further into detail, I desire, sir, that you will please to let his Majesty know that I humbly accept this instance of his favour with all possible gratitude.

'I beg leave also, sir, to return you my humble thanks for your good offices upon this and all occasions, and for your very obliging expressions of regard to, sir, your most obedient, most faithful, and most humble servant,

'JOSEPH BUTLER.'

The writer, no doubt, considered himself somewhat ill-used in not having had offered to him the richer see of Norwich, to which Dr Gooch was translated from Bristol. The plain-speaking of his letter to Walpole gave no offence: on the contrary, it seems to have made the desired impression, for within two years he was appointed to the deanery of St Paul's; and this addition to his income enabled him to resign his prebend at Rochester, and also the living of Stanhope, which he had been holding *in commendam* with his bishopric. One of his first acts of patronage as dean of St Paul's was to prefer his old master, Philip Barton, to the rectory of Hutton in Essex.

His accession of income from the deanery enabled him to indulge the taste for building which, in Seeker's opinion, had threatened to ruin him as rector of Haughton. He spent nearly five thousand pounds in the improvement and embellishment of the episcopal palace at Bristol, towards which the merchants of the city presented him with a large quantity of cedar. So liberal was the gift that much of it remained unused, and was

removed by the bishop afterwards to Durham, when he was translated thither. One ornament which he introduced into the palace chapel at Bristol was the subject of much comment both at the time and afterwards. He set up over the altar a large slab of black marble, inlaid with a cross in white marble about three feet high. Little objection would be taken to such a symbol now; but it was one of the points urged against him at a later date by those who accused him of a leaning towards Rome. Lord Hardwicke is said to have suggested to Bishop Young, who in after-days succeeded to the see of Bristol, to take the cross down. Young replied that he should probably never have set it up there, but that he would not have it said that Bishop Young had pulled down what Bishop Butler had erected: and the cross retained its position until it was destroyed with the chapel and palace in the Reform riots at Bristol in 1831. Even then, it is said that an old sexton, who had a traditional respect for the great bishop, searched among the ruins in the hope of recovering it, but found it broken to pieces.

It was very soon after he became bishop of Bristol that he was brought into communication with a man of very different temperament, who had a far larger influence on the religious life of England than the author of the 'Analogy.' The eager zeal of John Wesley had drawn him into practical antagonism to the cold and lifeless formalism which had crept over the Church of which he was an ordained minister; while the sober tone of her devotions, and her historical claim to his allegiance, had won Butler in spite of his Nonconformist education. They had more than one interview; but we

know nothing of the occasions, or of what passed between them, except from a fragment of a conversation recorded in Wesley's handwriting, in August 1739. He had been preaching in Butler's diocese, notably to the Kingswood colliers, and had most likely been complained of by some orthodox clergyman as an unauthorised intruder, and summoned to the palace to make his defence. Wesley's memorandum of what seems to have been their second interview begins abruptly with a reply of the bishop (apparently) to some remark on the vexed question of faith and works—'Why, sir, our faith itself is a good work—it is a virtuous temper of mind.' Wesley insisted that men were justified by faith only, and that faith was 'the gift of God.' That, replied Butler, was making out God to be 'a capricious tyrant;' if no moral goodness availed anything, then 'why did He not justify all,—or none?' After some discussion on the nature of justification, Butler said that 'the pretending to extraordinary revelations and gifts of the Holy Spirit was a horrid thing—a very horrid thing.' Wesley declared that he made no such pretension—he could not answer for Whitfield. Then the bishop asked whether he did not administer the Holy Sacrament at their meetings? to which Wesley replied that 'he never had, and believed he never should.' The conversation closed by the bishop advising him to leave the diocese, as he had no commission to preach there: to which, of course, Wesley replied that his commission was to preach everywhere, as 'a priest of the church universal.'[1] The narrator of this conversation very naturally gives the impression that he had the best of it; but one would

[1] Moore's Life of Wesley, vol. i. p. 468.

very much like to have had some account of it from Butler himself.

Any supposed want of recognition of Butler's merits on the part of king or minister was amply atoned for a few years later. On the death of Archbishop Potter in 1747, an offer was made to Butler (who had just been appointed Clerk of the Closet to the king) of the primacy. He declined it—probably unwilling, and perhaps unfitted from constitutional temperament, to undertake the responsibilities of such a position. The reason he is said to have given for his refusal is characteristic of the melancholy turn of mind which led him to see all things at their worst: 'It was too late,' he said, 'for him to try to support a falling Church.' His rejection of such high promotion was naturally a disappointment to his own family, who had been very prosperous in trade, and were better able to appreciate an archbishopric than the 'Analogy.' His nephew John, the wealthy bachelor already mentioned, came up to London purposely to offer to advance his uncle £20,000, or even a larger sum, if his hesitation to accept the primacy arose from any dread of the first expenses.

Two years afterwards he was offered the see of Durham, by the express desire of the king. This offer he was at first disposed to decline upon a scruple of conscience. Durham being a see-palatine, the lord-lieutenancy of the county, up to a very recent date, was attached to the bishopric. It was the wish of the then minister, the Duke of Newcastle, to separate them on this occasion, and to confer the lieutenancy upon a layman. When this was suggested to Butler, he is said to have replied that 'it was a matter of indifference to

him whether he died bishop of Bristol or of Durham; but that it was not a matter of indifference to him whether the honours of the see were invaded or not during his incumbency.' There was another arrangement proposed to him, by which the deanery of St Paul's, to be vacated by him on his translation, was to be conferred on his friend Secker, on condition that the new bishop of Durham would appoint a Dr Chapman to the stall at Durham which Secker would thus vacate. This having been suggested to Butler before his translation took place, he refused to consent to what appeared to him a *quasi*-simoniacal contract. His firmness on both points resulted in his being appointed to Durham without conditions of any kind.

The spirit in which he accepted this well-deserved promotion is simply, and no doubt honestly, expressed in the following letter to a friend:—

'. . . I thank you for your kind congratulations, though I am not without my doubts and fears how far the occasion of them is a real subject of congratulation to me. Increase of fortune is insignificant to one who thought he had enough before; and I foresee many difficulties in the station I am coming into, and no advantage worth thinking of, except some greater power of being serviceable to others; and whether this be an advantage, entirely depends on the use one shall make of it: I pray God it may be a good one. It would be a melancholy thing, in the close of life, to have no reflections to entertain one's self with, except that one had spent the revenues of the bishopric of Durham in a sumptuous course of living, and enriched one's friends with the promotions of it, instead of having really set one's self to do good, and promote worthy men. Yet this right use of fortune and power is more difficult than even the generality of good people think, and requires both a guard upon one's self, and a strength of mind to with-

stand solicitations, greater, I wish I may not find it, than I am master of.'

The bishop was anxious to revive Laud's idea of establishing Episcopacy in the North American colonies; but the Puritans of New England were so bitterly opposed to any scheme of the kind, and so much clamour was raised against it by the Dissenters at home, that although it was warmly taken up by Sherlock, bishop of London, the movement came to nothing.

The first and only charge which he addressed to the clergy of his new diocese drew upon him some captious criticism. He found the state of things amongst both clergy and laity such that he thought it needful to impress upon them the importance of external religion—'the keeping up, as well as we are able, the form and face of religion with decency and reverence.' For, as he goes on to say, 'the form of religion may indeed be, where there is little of the thing itself; but the thing itself cannot be preserved among mankind without the form.' He observes, with much point and force, how 'in the heathen world their superstition was the chief subject of statuary, sculpture, painting, and poetry: it mixed itself with business, civil forms, diversions, domestic entertainments, and every part of common life;' how, again, 'the Mohammedans are obliged to short devotions five times between morning and evening;' and how, 'in Roman Catholic countries, people cannot pass a day without having religion recalled to their thoughts by some or other memorial of it,—by some ceremony or public religious form occurring in their way: besides their frequent holidays, the short prayers they are daily called to, and the occasional

devotions enjoined by confessors.' By these means, he says, 'their superstition sinks deep into the minds of the people, and their religion also into the minds of such among them as are serious and well-disposed.' He impresses on his clergy the great evil of the neglect of the public service of the Church, 'not only on common days, but also upon saints' days;' and shows himself to have anticipated, on such points, the revival of old Church principles and practices by what is called the High Church party in the early part of the present century. Under this head of external religion he dwells upon 'the proper regard to the structures which are consecrated to the service of God;' and remarks, with the caustic satire of which he was evidently a master when he chose to use it, that 'in the present turn of the age, one may observe a wonderful frugality in everything which has respect to religion, and extravagance in everything else.' It must surprise any dispassionate reader of this charge now, to find that it was severely criticised in a pamphlet published soon afterwards,[1] as showing a manifest tendency on the part of the author to Romish views and practices, and that it formed one of the grounds upon which he was even accused of an actual conformity to Rome before his death. So far as the charge itself is concerned, it only requires to be read through to show the utter groundlessness of such an imputation.

Another feature in this Durham charge is even more

[1] 'A Serious Inquiry into the Use and Importance of External Religion, occasioned by some passages in the Lord Bishop of Durham's Charge,' &c. The authorship was afterwards admitted by Archdeacon Blackburne, and it is published in his Works.

interesting to readers of the 'Analogy,' as showing how thoroughly the author's mind was saturated with the importance of the leading principle laid down in the opening of that great work—that the seeker after moral or religious truth must be satisfied with probable evidence, not mathematical demonstration. The following passage, in fact, contains a summary in brief of the position which he sought to reclaim, at the very least, for the evidences of Christianity.

'Were the evidence of religion no more than doubtful, then it ought not to be concluded false any more than true, nor denied any more than affirmed; for suspense would be the reasonable state of mind with regard to it. And then it ought in all reason, considering its infinite importance, to have nearly the same influence upon practice as if it were thoroughly believed. For would it not be madness for a man to forsake a safe road, and prefer to it one in which he acknowledges there is an even chance he should lose his life, though there were an even chance likewise of his getting safe through it? Yet there are people absurd enough to take the supposed doubtfulness of religion for the same thing as a proof of its falsehood, after they have concluded it doubtful from hearing it often called in question. This shows how infinitely unreasonable sceptical men are with regard to religion; and that they really lay aside their reason upon this subject, as much as the most extravagant enthusiasts.'

Very probably the bishop thought some of his northern clergy might not have cared to encounter the hard reading and close thinking which the 'Analogy' demanded, and was willing to lay before them this important and neglected view of the evidences of religion, in the more direct and popular shape of a personal address.

He seems to have attended Parliament pretty regularly, though he is not known to have taken any part in the debates. His silence on the question of the Regency Bill in 1751 drew from the Earl of Orford (Horace Walpole) the sneering remark that 'the bishop of Durham had been wafted to that see in a cloud of metaphysics, and remained absorbed in it.' In the later years of his life he occupied, while attending his parliamentary duties, a house which he had bought at Hampstead, and fitted up with a somewhat fantastic taste, if the descriptions of it may be trusted. 'A most enchanting, gay, and elegant house,' Miss Talbot (daughter of Butler's old friend) calls it, in a letter to Mrs Carter; and it is certain that he laid out a good deal of money there. Some of the painted glass which he had introduced into it was presented by a subsequent occupier to Butler's old college of Oriel, where it may still be seen in the window of the audit-room. The bishop also expended considerable sums on his palaces, Durham Castle and Auckland, but did not live to complete his work. He maintained at Durham a liberal hospitality, to which the poorest of his clergy were welcomed, as well as the nobility and gentry of the neighbourhood. But his own private habits were always of the simplest kind. The following anecdote is given by the Rev. John Newton:

'A friend of mine, since deceased, told me that when he was a young man he once dined with the late Dr Butler, at that time bishop of Durham; and though the guest was a man of fortune, and the interview by appointment, the provision was no more than a joint and a pudding. The bishop apologised for his plain fare by saying "that it was his way of living; that he had long been disgusted with the fashion-

able expense of time and money in entertainments, and was determined that it should receive no countenance from his example."'

His liberality to public and private charitable objects was of almost too impulsive a character (reminding us of the tradition of his being unable to refuse a beggar), if a well-known story which was current on the subject be not rather apocryphal. A gentleman is said to have called upon him to ask his aid in some benevolent scheme which he was setting on foot. The bishop approved, and having summoned his steward, asked him how much money he had in the house? 'Five hundred pounds, my lord.' 'Five hundred pounds!' said Butler; 'what a shame for a bishop to have so much! Give it away at once—give it to this gentleman, who has a good use for it.'

In the exercise of the large patronage attached to his new diocese he was strictly conscientious, and took all pains to acquaint himself with the characters and deserts of his clergy. A book containing certain memoranda on these points (some of them partly in cipher) is preserved in the library of Oriel College. He even declined to give preferment to one of his nephews who was in holy orders, because he was not satisfied with what he heard of him; a scrupulousness very unusual in those times, and which is said to have drawn a remonstrance from a brother of the disappointed aspirant—John, who had so recently offered the loan to his uncle. 'My lord,' said he to the bishop, 'it is a misfortune to be related to you.'

He held the see of Durham less than two years. His health rapidly failed, and he was ordered by his physicians successively to Clifton and to Bath. At the

latter place he died, after some suffering, June 16, 1752, in his sixtieth year. His chaplain, Forster, who was in attendance on him, writing to Secker (then bishop of Oxford), says that 'during the last few days of his life, when he had in great measure lost the use of his faculties, he was perpetually talking of writing' to his old friend, 'though without seeming to have anything which he was at all capable of communicating.' He was buried in his old cathedral at Bristol.

Bishop Butler was a man who lived much to himself, with few intimacies, and apparently by no means a large circle of acquaintance. But there must have been much in his character that was very lovable, for the two or three who had become his friends in early life seem to have been devoted to him. To Edward Talbot's warm interest he owed, instrumentally, his success in life; and Secker watched over him, from the old school-days to his death at Bath, with more than the tenderness of a brother. His chaplain, Dr Forster, was much attached to him, and Catherine Talbot, his deceased friend's daughter, who with her mother was his frequent guest both at Stanhope and at Hampstead, speaks of him, in another letter to Mrs Carter, with evident affection.[1]

'From the first of my real remembrance, I have ever known in him the kind affectionate friend, the faithful adviser, which he would condescend to when I was quite a child; and the most delightful companion, from a delicacy

[1] Mr Bagehot, who ingeniously seeks to make out that Butler was a gloomy ascetic, says that 'there is no evidence of his ever having spoken to any lady save Queen Caroline.' This is what Butler would have called arguing on a preconceived hypothesis.—Literary Estimates, vol. ii. p. 74.

of thinking, an extreme politeness, a vast knowledge of the world, and a something peculiar, to be met with in nobody else. And all this in a man whose sanctity of manners and sublimity of genius gave him one of the first ranks among men.'

Surtees, in his 'History of Durham,' describes him as follows:—

'During the short time that Butler held the see of Durham he conciliated all hearts. In advanced years he retained the same genuine modesty and native sweetness of disposition which had distinguished him in youth, and in retirement. During the performance of the sacred office, a divine animation seemed to pervade his whole manner, and lighted up his pale, wan countenance, already marked with the progress of disease: like a torch glimmering in its socket, yet bright and useful to the last.'

'He was,' says Hutchinson, 'of a most reverend aspect; his face thin and pale; but there was a divine placidness in his countenance which inspired veneration, and expressed the most benevolent mind. His white hair hung gracefully on his shoulders, and his whole figure was patriarchal.'[1]

Of his private tastes and habits we know very little. He was fond of music; and his under-secretary, Emms, who had been a chorister of St Paul's, used to play to him on the organ in private when at Durham. A somewhat singular fancy is attributed to him by one of his domestic chaplains, Dr Tucker, afterwards dean of Gloucester. He would walk for hours in the little garden behind his palace at Bristol 'in the darkest night which the time of the year could afford;' and on one occasion, when the chaplain was with him,

[1] History of Durham, vol. i. p. 578.

he stopped suddenly to ask the question, 'What security is there against the insanity of individuals? The physicians know of none; and as to divines, we have no *data* either from Scripture or from reason to go upon relative to this affair.' Tucker admitted that 'no man had a lease of his understanding any more than of his life.' The bishop took another turn and stopped again. 'Why might not whole communities and public bodies be seized with fits of insanity as well as individuals?' The chaplain could give no opinion. 'Nothing,' continued the bishop, 'but this principle—that they are liable to insanity, equally at least with private persons—can account for the major part of those transactions of which we read in history.'

A recent writer asserts that Butler had no literary tastes: surely a rash assumption. The lad who began a critical reading of metaphysics at the Gloucester academy was likely to be a great reader all his life; and although Butler's retired habits and reticent nature make it impossible to discover what he did or did not read, there are traces enough of the student in his works, though he never quotes or gives references. All we are told by those who knew him is, that he was fond of studying 'the lives of the Roman Saints, and their books of mystic piety:' and here we are reminded of the little oratory at Stanhope. Coleridge says that 'Bishop Butler was all his life struggling against the devilish suggestions of his senses, which would have maddened him if he had relaxed the stern watchfulness of his reason for a single moment:' but nothing that we find in his life or writings seems to supply any justification of the statement. Somewhat apocry-

phal stories are told of the awe which he expressed at the near approach of death, but they suffice to show that he was a sincere and humble Christian. The same impression is gathered from several entries amongst his few private memoranda, as the following:—

'Be more afraid of myself than of the world.'

'To discern the hand of God in everything, and have a due sense of it.'

'Instead of deluding one's self in imagining one should behave better in times and circumstances other than those in which one is placed, to take care and be faithful in those one is placed in.'

Six sermons, preached on special public occasions between the years 1738 and 1748, during his occupancy of the see of Bristol, make up, with the 'Analogy,' the Rolls Sermons, and the Durham Charge, the brief list of his published works. In his will he leaves this express direction to his executor, Dr Forster—'that all my sermons, letters, and papers whatever, be burnt without being read by any one, so soon as may be after my decease.'

The charge of Romanism was revived against him, fifteen years after his death, in an anonymous pamphlet attributed either to Blackburne or Theophilus Lindsey, in which it was asserted that he had died in the communion of the Church of Rome. Secker, who had then become archbishop of Canterbury, came forward loyally to vindicate Butler's memory from this unfounded slander. It was the last tribute of a lifelong friendship, and one of the closing acts of his own life: he died next year.

CHAPTER II.

MODERN ETHICAL THEORIES.

THE position of Butler as an ethical writer cannot be understood without some knowledge of the theories which had been previously advanced on the subject of morals, and which he either combated or criticised, or in some cases adopted as the basis of his own, though he seldom refers by name to their authors. But the sketch here given must of necessity be slight and imperfect.

The existence of two distinct theories as to the foundations of morality may be traced from the earliest days in which the human mind was directed to such inquiries. Whether the ideas of right and wrong were something eternal and pre-existent in man's moral nature, or whether they were the result of experience, handed down from generation to generation, of the general tendencies of certain lines of conduct as affecting the happiness of the individual or of mankind — whether duty or pleasure was to be the rule of life—whether there was any such thing as unselfish virtue,—were questions on which philosophers had been at variance before the days of Plato and Aristotle. The two schools of moralists

are commonly known, amongst English writers upon ethics, as the Intuitive and the Inductive: the former being sometimes called the Sentimental, and the latter the Utilitarian or the Selfish. Setting aside the various subdivisions and cross-divisions of these two main lines of thought, it may be said broadly that the Intuitive moralists hold that we have implanted in us a moral faculty which takes cognisance of right and wrong, quite independent of our interest or our pleasure, and that the notion of right carries with it the obligation to follow it. The Inductive school contends, on the other hand, that we have no such innate moral faculty whatever; that such ideas of right and wrong as men conceive are gained from long observation of what does or does not conduce to happiness; that virtue is but an enlightened self-interest, and that the highest form of it is to seek 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' Both theories have their vulnerable points, which have been vigorously attacked by their opponents. They are mainly these. It is objected against the latter (the Inductive) hypothesis, that when the good of society clashes or seems to clash with our own personal pleasure or interest, there is no moral obligation to seek it, if the existence of a primary moral judgment be denied: while the Intuitive theory is said to be contradicted by the fact that this moral judgment is seen to vary in different nations and in different eras of civilisation, and that in what seems man's natural state—the savage—it is defective and sometimes wholly wanting. Its opponents point to the admitted fact that infanticide, murder of enemies, polygamy, and other customs which we hold to be highly immoral, have all

at different periods been held lawful. We have only to refer to Homer to see that in his day piracy was rather respectable than otherwise; and the idea that robbery, merely as such, was disgraceful, 'never occurred,' says Macaulay, 'to the mind of a Celtic chief.' To the Callatian Indians of Herodotus's story, who ate their fathers, the practice, says Locke, was 'the recognised mode of showing filial affection.'

Foremost amongst the moralists of the Intuitive school stand the names of Lord Herbert of Cherbury, Descartes, Cudworth, and Dr Samuel Clarke. Their views by no means correspond on all points, and may require a brief separate statement here. Herbert, who wrote in 1624, maintains that we have what he terms 'natural instincts.' They are principles implanted in us and sanctioned by nature, against which if we rebel it is at our peril. The criterion by which we may know them is their universality: what all men accept must be true. So the existence of the Deity, and the idea of virtue, and of a future state, are eternal and universal truths. Conscience is that which guides us to the practical use of such truths, exciting satisfaction in well-doing, uneasiness and repentance in ill-doing. With Herbert may be classed the great French philosopher Descartes, who published his speculations a few years later, and was the founder or originator of a distinct school which bears his name. He, too, appeals to 'intuition' as furnishing us with truths which are self-evident and do not admit of or need demonstration,—such as the consciousness of our own existence, or the being of God. In the power of thought he finds the proof of existence: *Cogito, ergo sum*—'I think, therefore

I exist.' The idea of perfection, which he finds in his own mind, necessitates the existence of a perfect Being, since every idea must have a cause—*Ex nihilo nihil fit* —'Nothing comes of nothing.' Such are two of his well-known leading axioms.

Cudworth, whose views were considerably influenced by those of Descartes, was the most learned of the English school of Intuitionists. His main position is embodied in the title of his posthumous work—'A Treatise on Eternal and Immutable Morality.' He charges the Inductive moralists (it was Hobbes especially to whom his book was intended as a reply) with reviving the old sophistries of Greek philosophers who had tried to obscure the distinction between right and wrong. This distinction is, he maintains, so absolute and eternal in the nature of things, that no arbitrary law of man, or even the will of God (and here he comes into collision with some learned divines) can alter it. God can no more make a thing good that is not good, than He can make a triangle that has not three angles. Good and Evil are among the eternal and immutable verities which we apprehend not by sense or experience, but by pure intellect, and are things far more real than the mere phenomena of sense. He holds, with Herbert, that our ideas of these things are innate: they are conceptions which the mind appears to have the power of drawing out of itself, wholly independent of teaching or experience, and which Plato for that reason sought to explain by the hypothesis of their having been acquired in a previous state of existence. Of the conditions of Happiness he takes no account in his system.

Clarke's theory is somewhat peculiar,—that 'things'

(by which expression he means rather 'Beings') stand one to another in certain relations which are necessary and eternal; that we can conceive nothing without at the same time conceiving its relations to something else; that there are such relations, for instance, between man and God, and between man and man; that from such relations there arises a Fitness or Unfitness of actions, independent of and antecedent to the positive command of God, or any expectation of present or future reward or punishment; and that from such fitness there arises an obligation, resting on 'the eternal Reason of things,' to which the sanction of reward or punishment, however effectual, is only secondary. In accordance with this 'fitness,' God wills what is agreeable to Justice, Goodness, and Truth: our duty to God is Veneration, Love, Worship; to our fellow-men, Justice and Benevolence; to ourselves, Self-preservation and Temperance. He rests his proof of his position (very much as we shall find Butler does hereafter) on the judgment we pass both upon our own actions and upon the conduct of others towards ourselves. And in reply to the objection that this moral fitness finds no place in the minds of savages, he answers that neither do the simplest mathematical truths,—yet both exist immutably, notwithstanding. Happiness he rather assumes to be consequent on the conduct being in harmony with this 'fitness,' than discusses directly. Wollaston's theory is very similar to Clarke's. He makes virtue the assertion of truth, and vice the denial of it: thus theft is a denial of the right of property. Of this immutable truth or falsehood he makes reason the judge. It may be remarked that he allows distinctly, what may meet the

grand objection of the Inductive moralist, that there is a progressive morality, notwithstanding: and that the ignorance of a truth reduces a vicious action to a mere error in morals—the affirmation by the agent of a false proposition assumed to be true. Cudworth, Clarke, and Wollaston have been classed together as 'Rational' moralists.

One more writer of the Intuitive school must be noticed, exactly contemporary with Butler,—whose earliest work was published the year before Butler's Sermons, and had probably been studied by him before the composition of the 'Analogy.' This was Francis Hutcheson, whose theory of the natural history of morals differed from those advanced by his predecessors in this, that he rejects not only the hypothesis that we gain our notions of right and wrong from education, or association of ideas, or from self-interest, but also that they result from either 'the fitness of things' or 'the truth of things.' He contends that we have a moral sense as natural to us as our other senses, capable like them of being trained by cultivation to a higher degree of perfection.[1] It has a taste and relish for what is good; and, in its highest development, it appreciates above everything else the exercise of goodwill to all men. Thus he may be said generally to resolve virtue into Benevolence; admitting (as Shaftesbury did, and as we shall see that Butler does) the twofold determination of man's nature towards our own good and the good of our neighbour, but holding that this 'moral sense,' when perfectly exercised, will lead us to decide at once in favour of the latter whenever they may seem to clash, and placing the highest form of happiness in Benevolence fully gratified.

[1] Inquiry into the Ideas of Beauty and Virtue.

At the head of the Inductive school in England—better known as that of Utilitarianism—both as to date and eminence, stands Thomas Hobbes of Malmesbury. He is the most uncompromising advocate of the selfish philosophy. He makes self the ultimate object of all human action, and rejects the notion of disinterested virtue almost with a sneer. 'When a man deliberates whether to do a thing or not, he does nothing else but consider whether it be better for himself to do it or not to do it.' 'Good and evil are names that signify our appetites and aversions, which in different tempers, customs, and doctrines of men are different.' 'He struck the affections,' as Mackintosh says, 'out of the map of human nature;' for he represents them as only so many forms of self-love. Charity is the complacent exercise of power, in being able to assist others. 'Pity is imagination of future calamity to ourselves;' 'even the goodness which we apprehend in God Almighty is his goodness to us.' The state of nature is a state of war, in which the notions of right and wrong, justice or injustice, find no place; in which every man has a right to everything. But this right men were content to forego, when they found by experience that, on the whole, self-restraint promoted happiness, and that their own selfish interests were best secured by order and co-operation; and thus certain principles were evolved which he terms (by what seems rather a misnomer) the 'laws of nature,' and these he makes to embrace, in the main, the received maxims of morality. Right, therefore, in Hobbes's system, is chiefly founded on recognised law,—that is, in other words, upon Might. Upon this the State—the great 'Leviathan'—rests, and dictates laws to

the people; and it is this established authority which regulates both religion and morality. Ethics and legislation, under this view, run parallel, if they are not absolutely identical. Writing as he did in the ferment of the Great Rebellion, he held all liberty to be pernicious, and that misery arose in great measure from men being allowed to have opinions. He inculcates the practice of virtue chiefly from motives of fear—in order to prevent injury to society or individuals; while Cudworth and his school rest it on the higher ground of a regard to the promotion of the general welfare. The theory of Hobbes was pushed to its cynical extreme a few years later by Mandeville, who took the lowest view of human nature ever seriously professed by a moralist, — that morality is only the cunning device of rulers, by which men are coaxed and flattered to prefer the public interest to their own. He might have found this cynical theory, no doubt, among the many discussed by Plato, who makes one of his disputants in the 'Gorgias' maintain that Justice is only the interest of the stronger; and puts into the mouth of the sophist Thrasymachus, in the 'Republic,' the assertion that rulers only legislate with a view to their personal interest, and regard their subjects in the same light as a shepherd does his sheep, which he fattens solely for his own profit. 'The moral virtues,' says Mandeville, 'are the political offspring which flattery begot upon pride.' Virtue in general he defines as 'a thirst for praise:' conveniently ignoring the argument, on which Butler dwells strongly, that the praise men willingly award to virtue is a criterion of its reality. Such a paradox was sure to attract readers in its day: it is worth notice here, as showing the abuse

of which the utilitarian doctrines may be capable. But Mandeville found more readers than disciples.

Locke follows Hobbes so far as to deny the existence of 'innate ideas.' If these be said, with Cudworth, to be universal, he denies it,—they do not exist in children, or in idiots, or in savages; and if it be intended to limit this universality to such as have arrived at the use of reason, then it is reason that discovers them to us, and they can no longer be said to be innate. The rules of morality seem to differ among men according to circumstances; and there is no rule which has not been formally set aside by some community or other. If such rules were really innate, they would be found to regulate the general practice of men, which we know they do not. Our moral sentiments, he holds, are formed by education, by custom, which is more powerful than nature, and, above all, by the 'association of ideas.' 'Good and Evil are nothing but Pleasure and Pain, or that which occasions pleasure or pain to us;' these are attached, as consequences, in the shape of reward or punishment, to certain courses of action by one of three laws—the divine law, when we can ascertain it, the law of the State, and the law of public opinion; and an action is morally good or morally evil according as it is or is not in conformity with one or other of these laws. And he observes, with much force and truth, that the sanction of this last law—the law of opinion—is often more efficacious than either the divine or the civil legislator. He admits that man has innate faculties, but traces the source of all ideas to sensation and reflection.

It is difficult to class with either of these schools of

ethics a writer to whom Butler was much indebted, Anthony Ashley Cooper, Earl of Shaftesbury. Trained in the principles of Locke, so far as concerns the ultimate appeal to reason on all questions, he yet opposed him strongly by upholding the existence in the human mind of innate ideas or principles, though he would rather have them termed 'connate.' 'The sense of Right and Wrong,' he says, 'is as natural to us as natural affection itself, and is a first principle in our constitution and make.'[1] His discursive fashion of writing often makes his opinions difficult to collect; he does not always seem consistent with himself, nor, indeed, does he make any pretence to lay down any formal system or theory. 'The most ingenious way of becoming foolish is,' he says, 'by a system.' But he deserves the credit of having maintained, perhaps more decidedly and strongly than had been done before, the existence of an unselfish element in human nature. He is so afraid of selfishness that, in his view, the holding out the prospect of rewards and punishments, though he admits they are efficacious in leading men to pursue virtue and avoid vice, is an appeal to selfish and inferior motives. He affirms that true happiness consists in the full exercise of our unselfish and benevolent affections. To love, with him, is to be happy—to hate is to be miserable. He sets himself to prove 'that to have the natural, kindly, and generous affections strong and powerful towards the good of the public, is to have the chief means and power of self-enjoyment; and that to want them is certain misery

[1] Inquiry concerning Virtue, Book I., Part 3, § 1.

and ill.'[1] He sees a certain harmony pervading the course of nature, which results in a moral beauty, as perceptible as physical beauty: and he asserts a moral sense by which we apprehend this. 'What is beautiful is harmonious and proportionable; what is harmonious and proportionable is true; and what is at once both beautiful and true, is of consequence agreeable and good.'[2] He will not admit that conscience carries with it any sense of obligation, possibly because he dislikes the notion of virtue being obligatory in any sense. He looks upon conscience as an emotion—a moral taste; the pleasure of gratifying it leads to virtue, while 'to want conscience, or natural sense of the odiousness of crime and injustice, is to be most of all miserable in life.' These seem to be the leading features of Shaftesbury's unsystematic 'Inquiry after Virtue,' the nature and the grounds of which he held might be discovered by ethics without appeal to revelation. It will be seen how Butler, in his sermons, adopts this mode of inquiry as far as a divine, speaking from the pulpit, might venture to do, and rarely appeals to Scripture until he has fairly proved his point without it. There is no doubt that Butler had studied Shaftesbury's writings attentively; and though in his ethical sermons, and still more in his 'Analogy,' he differs from him as to the moral value of rewards and punishments, the sermons themselves are based very much upon Shaftesbury's speculations. He sees, with him, 'an order and symmetry of the inward part,' which leads him to discuss human nature as a system or constitution.

[1] Ibid., Book II., Part 1, § 3 *ad fin.* [2] Miscellanies, iii. ch. 2.

Like Shaftesbury, Butler does not profess to lay down any formal system of ethics. His views of moral philosophy are set forth in his 'Sermons on Human Nature,' to which those on Benevolence, on Compassion, and upon Resentment, serve by way of appendix and illustration, and in the 'Dissertation upon Virtue' which he has appended to the third chapter of the 'Analogy.' They are also to be found interspersed in other parts of this later work, which help to fill up the outline. For he found it impossible to dissociate philosophy from religion in his own mind; he would have agreed with South, that 'what is nonsense upon a principle of Reason will never be sense upon a principle of Religion.' Much of his reasoning, therefore, in the first part of the 'Analogy,' proceeds upon purely ethical principles —those involved in the constitution of human nature. The 'Sermons' appear to be intended mainly as an answer to those sceptics who pushed to an extreme the principles of Locke.

CHAPTER III.

SERMONS ON HUMAN NATURE.

As Butler's Sermons preached at the Rolls Chapel preceded his 'Analogy' in composition and publication, so also they may be regarded as containing the first germs of the argument afterwards developed in that work. 'There are two ways,' he observes in his preface, 'in which morals may be treated:'—

'One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things [which is the system of Cudworth, Clarke, and Wollaston]; the other from a matter of fact,—namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is which is correspondent to this whole nature. In the former method, the conclusion is expressed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reason of things; in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature. Thus they both lead us to the same thing, our obligations to the practice of virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other. The first seems the most direct formal proof, and in some respects the least liable to cavil and dispute; the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind, and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life.'

This latter method, he tells us, has been mainly followed in these sermons,—in the first three, wholly. These three, then, are entitled 'Sermons on Human Nature.' They are in themselves an analysis, original in idea and masterly in execution, of man's moral and social constitution. It is from these three sermons that Mackintosh (no blind disciple of Butler) declared that he 'had learnt all his philosophy.' In these, he says, 'Butler has taught truths more capable of being distinguished from the doctrines of his predecessors, more satisfactorily established, more comprehensively applied to particulars, more rationally connected with each other, and therefore more worthy of the name of discovery, than any with which we are acquainted.' 'They were intended,' says the author in his preface, 'to explain what is meant by the nature of man, when it is said that virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it; and, by explaining, to show that the assertion is true.' Thus he practically takes as his text throughout the old dogma of the Stoics, that in following nature we should be choosing the best guide. But this profession of following nature will be 'at best but a loose way of talk' (as Wollaston had said, and Butler agrees), unless we have a clear conception of what the term 'nature' in this application means.

Human nature is to be considered, then, as a system or constitution—a whole, made up of several parts, but of which the idea is not complete unless we include 'the relations and respects which those parts have to each other.' Of this he gives the following illustration, which may possibly have supplied Paley with the hint for the well-known passage in which he argues that

the existing world implies a Creator as certainly as the sight of a watch would lead to the conclusion that it had a maker:—

'Let us instance in a watch; suppose the several parts of it taken to pieces and placed apart from each other; let a man have ever so exact a notion of these several parts, unless he considers the respects and relations which they have to each other, he will not have anything like the idea of a watch. Suppose these several parts brought together and anyhow united; neither will he yet, be the union ever so close, have an idea which will bear any resemblance to that of a watch. But let him view those several parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the manner of a watch; let him form a notion of the relations which those several parts have to each other, all conducive in their respective ways to this purpose, showing the hour of the day; and then he has the idea of a watch. Thus it is with regard to the inward frame of a man. Appetites, passions, affections, and the principle of reflection, considered merely as the several parts of our inward nature, do not at all give us an idea of the system or constitution of this nature; because the constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into consideration, namely, by the relation which these several parts have to each other—the chief of which is the authority of reflection or conscience.'

The first sermon discusses human nature in its principles, as regards self, and as regards society; the second deals with its complex elements, and their relation to each other, and insists on the grand supremacy of Conscience; the third shows that such constitution of human nature evolves rules of virtue, and makes them obligatory in practice. The method pursued is something like the following.

There is a natural instinct in man which tends to his

own self-preservation and happiness; and there is a natural principle of benevolence, 'which is to society in some degree what self-love is to the individual.' These are distinct, and must be so considered, though they do practically coincide: and the existence of these two distinct principles is a clear indication that we are made for society, and are intended to act for the good of society, as well as to take care of ourselves. Far from admitting, with Hobbes, that 'a state of nature is a state of war,' Butler holds, with Aristotle, that man is naturally a social animal. He even goes so far, in one place, as to declare that a due recognition of this fact, 'that mankind is a community—that we all stand in a relation to each other—is the sum of morals.'[1] And he gathers from Scripture that the future state will be a community also. The existence of love, of friendship, of family affections, in however low a degree, he takes as sufficient proof that 'benevolence' is a principle of our nature.[2] And these two principles of self-love and benevolence are so far connected, that 'we can scarce promote the one without the other,' and 'self-love is one chief security of our right behaviour towards society.'

Here, as elsewhere, Butler shows himself the willing scholar of Aristotle. He had learnt from the 'Ethics' that self-love, properly understood, is a duty. 'The good man must necessarily be a lover of himself;'[3] that such self-love is quite distinct from what we term self-

[1] Sermon 'On Forgiveness.'

[2] There is a paper in the Spectator (No. 601) on this subject, which had probably come under Butler's notice. The concluding sentence exactly expresses his view—'Place the mind in its right posture, it will immediately discover its innate propension to beneficence.'

[3] Ethics, viii. 7. 6.

ishness, which only seeks to gratify the lower part of our nature: the real self is the nobler part—the intellectual.[1] So again, Aristotle represents Friendship (which nearly answers to Butler's term 'Benevolence,') as an extension of self-love, for 'the friend is a second self;' and though the man of high principle will give up life and property for his friend or for his country at the call of honour, yet even in this he does not put self out of sight, inasmuch as he retains for himself the higher good—honour itself.[2]

We have also passions and affections, distinct alike from self-love and from benevolence, which yet, in their proper exercise, 'contribute and lead us to public good as well as to private;' and this sometimes when exercised without any such view or intention. For instance, the appetite of hunger tends unconsciously to self-preservation, and the love of reputation contributes, without such intention, to the public good; in both which cases they are 'instruments in the hand of Providence,' and proofs of the Divine intention that 'we should be instruments of good to each other as well as to ourselves.' We are thus unconsciously pursuing an end different from and beyond the mere gratification of the special appetite or passion. This distinction (which Butler may have found in Aquinas) is a peculiar feature in his psychology.

Thirdly, we have Conscience; as to which these are Butler's words:—

'There is a principle of reflection in men, by which they distinguish between, approve, and disapprove their own actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures

[1] Ethics, ix. 4. 4.

[2] Ibid., ix. 8. 9.

as to reflect upon our own nature. The mind can take a view of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions, passions, affections, as respecting such objects, and in such degrees; and of the several actions consequent thereupon. In this survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is Conscience; for this is the strict sense of the word, though sometimes it is used so as to take in more.'

The existence of Conscience, he holds, will not be disputed: the place assigned to it by Nature, its authority, and the influence it ought of right to have, he will consider hereafter. From what has been said he holds it to be 'as manifest that we are made for society, and to promote the happiness of it, as that we were intended to take care of our own life and health and private good.' This gives, he thinks, 'a different draught of human nature from what we are often presented with:' and his usually cold and measured language warms into eloquence as he proceeds thus to illustrate his position:—

'There is such a natural principle of attraction in man towards man, that having trod the same tract of land, having breathed in the same climate, barely having been in the same artificial district or division, becomes the occasion of contracting acquaintances and familiarities many years after: for anything may serve the purpose. Thus relations merely nominal are sought and invented, not by governors, but by the lowest of the people, which are found sufficient to hold mankind together in little fraternities and copartnerships; weak ties, indeed, and what may afford fund enough for ridicule, if they are absurdly considered as the real principles of that union; but they are in truth

merely the occasions, as anything may be of anything, upon which our nature carries us on according to its own previous bent and bias; which occasions, therefore, would be nothing at all, were there not this prior disposition and bias of nature. Men are so much one body, that in a peculiar manner they feel for each other shame, sudden danger, resentment, honour, prosperity, distress; one or another, or all of these, from the social nature in general, from benevolence, upon the occasion of natural relation, acquaintance, protection, dependence; each of these being distinct cements of society. And, therefore, to have no restraint from, no regard to others in our behaviour, is the speculative absurdity of considering ourselves as single and independent,—as having nothing in our nature which has respect to our fellow-creatures,—reduced to action and practice. And this is the same absurdity as to suppose a hand, or any part, to have no natural respect to any other, or to the whole body.'

It may be objected that there are in man's nature dispositions and principles mischievous to society: so also there are those which are mischievous to himself. There are ungoverned passions, which men will gratify to their own injury as well as to the injury of others: but there is no principle of hatred of others *per se*, any more than of self-hatred. If it be said there are persons without natural affection to others,—so also there are persons practically without natural affection for themselves; the nature of man is not to be judged by exceptions. Men too often neglect their own true interest and happiness: so they do those of their neighbours, when it is inconsistent in either case with a present gratification. A passage in the preface to these sermons may here deserve quotation.

'Neither does there appear any reason to wish self-love were weaker in the generality of the world than it is. The influ-

ence which it has seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the degree or strength of it. Every caprice of the imagination, every curiosity of the understanding, every affection of the heart, is perpetually showing its weakness by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly, sacrifice the greatest known interest to fancy, inquisitiveness, love, or hatred,—any vagrant inclination. The thing to be lamented is, not that men have so great regard to their own good or interest in the present world,—for they have not enough; but that they have so little to the good of others. . . . With all the mistakes men fall into about interest, it would be less mischievous than the extravagances of mere appetite, will, or pleasure.'

In the second sermon, he attempts, from the consideration of the elements of human nature, to define morality. It is difficult, he admits. He proposes to solve the difficulty very much in accordance with Aristotle's method: he inquires what is the proper end (τέλος) of man. 'If the real nature of any creature leads him and is adapted to such and such purposes only, or more than to any other, there is reason to believe the author of that nature intended it for those purposes.' We must 'follow nature,' no doubt,—in this the ancients were right. But this does not mean acting as we please—according as passion, reflection, or appetite (the several parts of it) happen to be the strongest in the individual; but in obeying that highest principle, 'to which belongs the adjustment and correction of all other inward movements and affections.' This is that principle of reflection, or Conscience, already spoken of, which in every man 'distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart as well as his external actions: which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some

actions to be in themselves just, right, and good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust; which without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him, the doer of them, accordingly.' It is 'a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority for being so.' Passion, or interest, may rebel against this authority,—nay, in some circumstances may prove the stronger for the time; but all such power is mere usurpation,—'a violation of the constitution of man.'

'All this is no more than the distinction which everybody is acquainted with between mere power and authority; only, instead of being intended to express the difference between what is possible and what is lawful in civil government, here it has been shown applicable to the several principles in the mind of man. Thus that principle by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper, and actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some influence (which may be said of every passion, of the lowest appetites), but likewise as being superior, as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others; insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea,—that is, of the faculty itself; and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right,—had it power, as it has manifest authority,—it would absolutely govern the world.'

Having thus established the supremacy of Conscience, we see what is meant by 'human nature,' when virtue is said to consist in following it, and vice in deviating from it.

As every civil constitution implies subordination of its parts under one supreme authority — the strength of each particular member not entering into the idea, —and as, if this subordination be removed—if mere strength prevails over authority — that constitution is destroyed; so it is not the comparative strength of reason, appetites, or passions, but their relation to each other, and their subordination to Conscience, which makes up the complete idea of Human Nature. And if the lower faculties prevail over that which is of right supreme, that constitution is violated. So that man 'has the rule of right within him; what is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.' This rule, he contends, is not difficult to apply in practice. In strong contradiction to the dictum of Hobbes, already quoted, that 'when a man deliberates he does nothing else than consider whether it be better for himself to do the thing or not to do it,' Butler says—

'Let any plain, honest man, before he engage in any course of action, ask himself, "Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong?—Is it good, or is it evil?" I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue by almost any fair man, under almost any circumstances.'

He repeats this in his sermon on the character of Balaam: 'In all common ordinary cases we see *intuitively* at first view what is our duty—what is the honest part. This is the ground of the observation that 'the first thought is often the best.' And if we ask what obligation lies upon us to obey this inward rule, Butler's answer is, that the fact of its being a law of our nature makes it obligatory.

It may be objected, why put any restraint upon ourselves for the good of others? Why not rid ourselves of such embarrassments? He replies, that our own selfish happiness depends much on our relations with others; and that we can gain no end without restraints of some kind. And if it be said, again, that we need, in any case, submit only to such restraints as tend to *our own* interests and convenience—he agrees: our own happiness *is* the measure and end of virtue; only, he insists that not vice but virtue promotes happiness; and that it is vice, not virtue, that puts a man under most thraldom and restraint. Self-love does, in its true sense, coincide with virtue. He sums up the whole argument in these conclusions,—that the correspondence of actions to the true nature of the agent renders them natural, as their disproportion to this nature renders them unnatural; that such correspondence does not mean agreement with the principle that happens to be *strongest*, but with the higher principle, which is in nature and kind superior to the others; and that this principle is conscience, which leads the same way as reasonable self-love. His practical conclusion—required to justify these metaphysical essays in being entitled 'Sermons'—is, that 'duty and interest are perfectly coincident, for the most part, in this world, but entirely and in every instance, if we take in the future and the whole—this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things.'

The order in which the remaining sermons are arranged appears somewhat arbitrary; and it may be convenient to take first those in which the author applies the principles already laid down in the discourses on Human Nature to four several kinds of passions or affections—

Compassion, Anger, Benevolence, or love of our neighbour, and Love to God. And as 'Benevolence' has already been defined as the principle in man, socially considered, which corresponds to self-love in the individual, if we take Butler's discussion of it first in order, it will perhaps make the general connection of his moral theory seem clearer.

Indeed, in the first of his two sermons on Benevolence he resumes his previous ground. He discusses the relation of this affection to self-love—which is the desire for individual happiness, 'inseparable from all sensible creatures.' But self-love is not in itself happiness,—that consists in the reasonable gratification of our passions and affections; whereas self-love, in excess, may only cause inconvenience and misery. Benevolence, then, is not necessarily opposed to self-love merely because it is distinct from it, any more than the appetites and passions are. The idea of self-love 'does not exclude goodwill, or love towards others, otherwise than merely by not including it: nor otherwise than it excludes love of art, or of reputation, or of anything else. . . . Love of our neighbour has just the same respect to, and is no more distant from self-love, than hatred of our neighbour, or than love or hatred of anything else.'

Neither does the fact that any affection tends to the happiness of another hinder its tending to our own happiness too. The object which a man pursues for his own gratification may at the same time conduce to the good of others; and the ambitious man who has gained his object is not necessarily happier than he who has 'such a singularity of mind' as to have an affection for the public good, if he too be successful.

The state of mind engendered by benevolence is no small component of happiness: nay, 'the being in good humour (which is benevolence while it lasts) is itself the temper of satisfaction and enjoyment.' The author has thus briefly summed up his argument:—

'The short of the matter is no more than this. Happiness consists in the gratification of certain affections, appetites, passions, with objects which are by nature adapted to them. Self-love may indeed set us on work to gratify these; but happiness or enjoyment has no immediate connection with self-love, but arises from such gratification alone. Love of our neighbour is one of those affections. This, considered as a virtuous principle, is gratified by a consciousness of endeavouring to promote the good of others; but considered as a natural affection, its gratification consists in the actual accomplishment of this endeavour. Now, indulgence or gratification of this affection, whether in that consciousness or this accomplishment, has the same respect to interest as indulgence of any other affection; they equally proceed from or do not proceed from self-love, they equally include or equally exclude this principle. Thus it appears that benevolence and the pursuit of public good hath at least as great respect to self-love and the pursuit of private good as any other particular passions and their respective pursuits.'

There are cases in which self-love, or private interest, competes or interferes with our particular passions or affections; but this applies much oftener to the grosser appetites, or to such affections as pride or revenge, than to benevolence.

The mistake of assuming this special opposition between self-love and the love of others has arisen, the author considers, from a confused notion of property, —as though property itself, and not the enjoyment of

it, constituted happiness; 'for if property and happiness be one and the same thing, as by increasing the property of another you lessen your [own] property, so by promoting the happiness of another you lessen your own happiness;' whereas this exclusion of others forms only a part, and not the whole, of the idea of property. The clearing up of this mistake is of importance; because

'Common reason and humanity will have some influence upon mankind, whatever becomes of speculations; but, so far as the interests of virtue depend upon the theory of it being secured from open scorn, so far its very being in the world depends upon its appearing to have no contrariety to private interest and self-love.

In his second sermon on the subject, Butler considers —1. The proper object of this affection; 2. The proper extent of it; 3. Its influence on our own character. First, then, benevolence in its highest form must be the perfection of God rather than man,—it embraces love to the whole universe. But in our own case, even mankind, which the moralists suggest—or our country, as others would substitute (our tribe, according to Spencer and Clifford)—is too large an object. We must be practically content to entertain this affection merely as Christianity limits it—to our neighbours.

Then, secondly, if we are to love our neighbour 'as ourself,' the affection must be of the same kind, and bear a certain proportion to our love for ourselves; for, since we take human nature to be a well-balanced constitution, it is not the degree in which we entertain any one affection, but the proportion which that one bears

to others within us, which really goes to the formation of character. And the proportion which benevolence and self-love bear to each other is that which 'denominates men's character as to virtue.' As to the measure of this proportion, it may be said that, so long as a man does not neglect what is due to himself, the more care and thought and money he employs in doing good to others, the nearer he comes to 'the law of perfection.' Even though the expression, that we should love others 'as ourselves,' be taken to mean an equality of affection, there need be no apprehension, he thinks, that the care of ourselves would be neglected.

Thirdly, its influence extends to all the relations of life: it creates a charitable temper; it prevents our giving offence, or readily taking it; and may be said with truth to comprehend all other virtues. Not that Butler resolves all virtue into benevolence, as Hutcheson and Leibnitz would teach; it must be not 'a blind propension,' but under the guidance of reason. He guards his readers against this notion in his 'Dissertation on Virtue.'

'Benevolence, and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case, in the review of one's own character or that of others, our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to everything but the degrees in which benevolence prevailed, and the degrees in which it was wanting. That is, we should neither approve of benevolence to some persons rather than to others, nor disapprove injustice and falsehood upon any other account, than merely as an overbalance of happiness was foreseen likely to be produced by the first, and of misery by the second.'

So when, in the conclusion of his sermon, he exalts this principle of benevolence by the assertion that 'we have no clear conception of any positive moral attribute in the Supreme Being, but what may be resolved up into goodness'—we must be careful to attach its due weight to the phrase 'no clear conception;' for otherwise such language will be in contradiction to what he says elsewhere.

'Some men seem to think the only character of the Author of nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence; and supposing this to be the only character of God, veracity and justice in Him would be nothing but benevolence conducted by wisdom. Now surely this ought not to be asserted unless it can be proved; for we should speak with cautious reverence on such a subject.'—Analogy, i. 3.

Butler asserts that Hobbes had defined benevolence, or goodwill, to be nothing more than the love of power,[1] and (in a note to his first sermon) satirically observes that such a view can only be explained to any ordinary mind by supposing that this 'learned person had a general hypothesis to which the appearance of goodwill could no otherwise be reconciled.' The fact that what has the appearance of benevolence is sometimes nothing but ambition, and that delight in the display of superiority

[1] He is here somewhat unfair to Hobbes, if this is the passage to which he refers: 'There is yet another passion, sometimes called love, but more properly goodwill or charity. There can be no greater argument to a man of his own power than to find himself able not only to accomplish his own desires, but also to assist other men in theirs; and this is the conception wherein consisteth charity.'—Human Nature, ix. 17. Hobbes's language comes to little more than Butler's—that 'charity is the pleasure felt by the stronger in the conscious exercise of power on behalf of the weaker.

does often mix itself with benevolence, 'only makes it more specious to call it ambition than hunger, of the two;' but ambition really no more accounts for the appearance of benevolence generally than hunger does. He adds that delight in the exercise of power may as often lead to mischief and cruelty, as to charity and goodwill.

A note upon Hobbes's view of benevolence, which appears amongst Butler's few private memoranda, may find its place here.

'Hobbes's definition of benevolence—that 'tis the love of power—is base and false; but there is more of truth in it than appears at first sight,—the real benevolence of men being, I think, for the most part, not indeed the single love of power, but the love of power to be exercised in the way of doing good. That is a different thing from the love of the good or happiness of others by whomsoever effected, which last I call single or simple benevolence. How little there is of this in the world may appear by observing how many persons can bear with great tranquillity that a friend or child should live in misery, who yet cannot bear the thought of their death.'[1]

The sermon on Compassion is also in great measure a refutation of Hobbes, on whose definition of this affection Butler has appended a long note. The following is Hobbes's statement in his own words:—

'Pity is imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity. But when it lighteth on such as we think have not deserved the same, the compassion is greater, because then there appeareth more probability that the same may happen to us;

[1] Steere's Unpublished Remains of Bishop Butler.

for the evil that happeneth to an innocent man may happen to every man. But when we see a man suffer for great crimes, which we cannot easily think will fall upon ourselves, the pity is the less. And therefore men are apt to pity those whom they love; for, whom they love they think worthy of good, and therefore not worthy of calamity. Thence it is also that men pity the vices of some persons at the first sight only, out of love to their aspect. The contrary of pity is hardness of heart, proceeding either from slowness of imagination, or some extreme great opinion of their own exemption from the like calamity, or from hatred of all or most men.'—Human Nature, chap. ix.

Butler remarks in his note that those who, like Hobbes, exclude the social affections altogether from their system, and reduce all human motives to the principle of selfishness, are driven to give some such explanation of a feeling the existence of which they cannot deny: they find 'a plain matter-of-fact which they cannot reconcile with the general account they think fit to give of things, and therefore, instead of that manifest fact, they substitute another which is reconcilable to their own scheme.' He maintains that such a definition as that given by Hobbes makes compassion almost identical with fear, and that he makes ourselves, and not our friends, the object of the passion, in plain contradiction to our experience. He admits that the sense of our own liability to the like suffering (as also a conscious satisfaction in our present freedom from it) may be accompaniments of the feeling of compassion, but they are not of the essence of such feeling. And he adds, with much acuteness, that if the sight of the miseries of others excites an imagination of danger to ourselves, it is a proof of sympathy, which is an essential principle in

his own account of human nature, but which would be 'furthest from the thoughts' of Hobbes.[1]

He himself ranks Compassion among those principles of action which belong to man in his social capacity. It is as natural to him as self-love. It is the correlative of another feeling, not so powerful, and not so needful in man's social relations, and which, perhaps for that reason, has no single term in use to express it,[2]—gratification at the sight of the felicity of others.

There is nothing strange, he considers, in our being thus affected towards the interests of others:—

'For if there be any appetite or any inward principle besides self-love, why may there not be an affection towards the good of our fellow-creatures, and delight in that affection's being gratified, and uneasiness from things going contrary to it?'[3]

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[1] It may perhaps be questioned whether Butler is right in saying that a conscious satisfaction in our own freedom from suffering excites pity at the sight of it in others. Lucretius seems more near the truth when he says that we are apt to view the sufferings of others with a sort of self-congratulation,—'Suave mari magno,' &c.

[2] Butler, like Aristotle, feels the want of sufficiently distinct terms.

[3] Hume, who has followed Butler's views more frequently than might have been expected, in defending the existence of the unselfish element in human nature, has a very similar passage: 'Hunger and thirst have eating and drinking for their end, and from the gratification of those primary appetites arises a pleasure which may become the object of another species of desire or inclination that is secondary and interested. In the same manner, there are mental passions by which we are impelled immediately to seek particular objects, such as fame or power or vengeance, without any regard to interest: and when these objects are attained, a pleasing enjoyment ensues. . . . Now where is the difficulty of conceiving that this may be likewise the case with benevolence and friendship? and that from the original frame of our temper we may feel a desire of another's happiness or good, which by means of that affection be-

It may be argued that Compassion is a weakness rather than a true motive of action—a passion which may mislead us, whereas we ought to be influenced by reason only. Mandeville, in fact, did so argue: pity, he says, is as much a frailty of our nature as anger, pride, or fear. But it is, says Butler, no more a weakness than are our senses or appetites; 'our passions are as really a part of our constitution as our senses;' both are 'a supply to the imperfection of our nature;' and to seek to eradicate them is no mark of wisdom.

1. The reasonable exercise of such affections as this increases the happiness of life. The happiness of others adds to our own, and this fact necessarily involves compassion at their unhappiness; and the recognised existence of such a feeling does in some sense alleviate suffering.

2. Such affections are an incentive to our duties to others. As our passions and appetites aid in securing our private good (we might forget to support life sufficiently but for the appetite of hunger), so the principle of benevolence needs 'the under-affections, which are its assistants,' to insure its full exercise. Compassion insures for the distressed an access to our feelings which otherwise might be wanting. And even to those natures in which the feeling is absent, its general existence serves as a rebuke and restraint.

With some of the tenets of stoicism Butler, Stoic as he shows himself in his general theory of morals, has no sympathy whatever.

comes our own good, and is afterwards pursued' from the combined motives of benevolence and self-enjoyment?'—Inquiry Concerning Morals, App. II.

'In general, experience will show that as want of natural appetite to food supposes and proceeds from some bodily disease; so the apathy the Stoics talk of, as much supposes or is accompanied with somewhat amiss in the moral character, in that which is the health of the mind. Those who formerly aimed at this upon the foot of philosophy appear to have had better success in eradicating the affections of tenderness and compassion, than they had with the passions of envy, pride, and resentment: these latter, at best, were but concealed, and that imperfectly too. How far this observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural impulses of their affections, in order to form themselves for business and the world, I shall not determine.'

And with Hobbes's speculations still in his mind, he closes the first of the two sermons on Compassion with these remarks on the danger of what he calls 'over-refinements in morality and religion:'—

'Morality and religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: they must appeal to what we call common-sense, as distinguished from superior capacity and improvement, because they appeal to mankind. Persons of superior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors, which no one of mere common understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter character could ever of himself have thought that there was absolutely no such thing in mankind as affection to the good of others (suppose of parents to their children); or that what he felt upon seeing a friend in distress was only fear for himself; or, upon supposition of the affections of kindness and compassion, that it was the business of wisdom and virtue to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest contradictions to nature has been laid down by men of speculation as a discovery in moral philosophy; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious appearances to the contrary.'

In his second sermon on the same subject (which is rather the second part of an essay too long for delivering all at once) he begins with a sentence in which we find the key-note of the 'Analogy:' 'There is a much more exact correspondence between the natural and the moral world than we are apt to take notice of.'[1] And he quotes from Ecclesiasticus what might have served for the motto of his great work—"All things are double one against another.' The inward frame of man answers to the external condition and circumstances of his life, and the purpose or final cause of the affections may be as certainly discovered as in the case of the material world. The final cause of compassion is the prevention or relief of misery.

The despondent tone of Butler's mind, which has been remarked by more than one careful student of his writings, may perhaps be traced in the whole bearing of this second sermon. He holds that 'the power we have over the misery of our fellow-creatures, to occasion or to lessen it,' is much greater, and more important, than our power to promote their happiness; as also man's capacity for misery is greater (or at least more lasting) than his capacity for happiness: and this it is which makes compassion for others so much more needful and more natural than the correlative feeling which leads us to rejoice in their well-doing. And he concludes that our aim in life for ourselves should be rather 'to escape misery,' or to obtain some relief from it, than to pursue

[1] 'For, to correspond with object-matters that are specifically distinct, nature must have framed parts of the soul that are specifically distinct; since their knowledge of their respective object-matter cannot but depend upon a certain similarity to and affinity with it.' —Aristotle, Ethics, vi. 1 (Williams's translation).

or aim at any high degree of happiness. So he elsewhere declares that, 'if the discoveries of men of research tend in any way to render life *less unhappy*, then are they most usefully employed.' In this view of human life he stands almost alone amongst moralists, as he is surely in contradiction to the natural instincts of humanity. Here we find him no longer in accord with Aristotle, whose whole system assumes happiness, under whatever ideal, as the natural and fitting aim of life, and an aim which, rightly directed, will be on the whole successful. Yet Aristotle fully recognises the difficulty of its attainment: that at the best we can only be happy 'as men,' which can be by no means a perfect happiness. In one place he even seems to admit that the grandest result of virtue may lie, not in securing happiness, but in bearing the ills of life nobly; and that all that can be predicated with certainty of virtuous energies is, that the man who steadily exercises them can never be really miserable.[1] Butler might perhaps appeal, in support of his own view, to the admitted experience that the pleasure most sensibly felt is the relief from pain, and to the vague dissatisfaction with the present felt alike by the earnest and the idle—said by a modern preacher to be 'one of the signatures of man's immortality'[2]—which in the one case is often the moving spring of high enterprises, and in the other creates a restless craving for excitement. Whether the pursuit of happiness, as we commonly understand the term, is the highest philosophical view of human life, may be questionable; but it is that which will always commend itself to ordinary minds, and no theory of morals or of

[1] Ethics, i. 10. 11, 14.

[2] F. W. Robertson.

religion will be accepted as practical which does not claim at least a probable balance of happiness as the result of the observance of its laws. Mr Arnold ingeniously suggests that Butler hesitates to recognise too distinctly the desire for happiness, because he is 'afraid of men's cutting and carving for apparent happiness, in defiance of the rules of justice and virtue.' But his expressions on this subject may more probably be ascribed to his peculiar temperament.

The sermons on 'Resentment' and on 'Forgiveness of Injuries' are original and striking. The author here repeats his warning, that in discussing the passions we must take human nature as it is, not as we think God might have made it. We have only to consider for what end, being what we are, the passion was given us, and so note its possible abuses.

Of Resentment he distinguishes two kinds: first, the hasty and sudden emotion which we call Anger, or sometimes, by a limitation of the term, simply Passion; often a mere instinct, excited by 'opposition or by sudden burst of violence,' in which the reasoning faculty, as to any injustice or intentional wrong done us, has no share. This instinct is implanted in us for the prevention of violence, or resistance to it. It is defensive merely, not judicial. Secondly, there is the deliberate feeling, to which the term 'Resentment' is more strictly applied. This is excited only when there is a wrong or injustice (or at least what we take to be such), and not merely harm, done to ourselves or others. 'It is not natural but moral evil—not suffering, but injury'—which raises it. 'It is a weapon put into our hands by Nature against injury, injustice, and cruelty.'

Both forms of this passion have their abuses. Sudden anger may arise on insufficient cause, or no cause at all; may assume the character of violent rage in strong natures, or peevishness in the weak. And deliberate resentment is commonly carried to abuse, 'when from partiality to ourselves we imagine an injury done to ourselves when there is none; when this partiality represents it to us as being greater than it really is;' or when we resent, as an injury, an unintentional harm done us, or inflict pain or injury to gratify our resentment. He notices, too, the evil which so commonly accompanies the passion when in excess—'a certain determination and resolute bent of mind not to be convinced or set right, though it be ever so plain that there is no reason for the displeasure.'

But in spite of all such abuses, this passion is one of the safeguards of society. It serves as 'a balance to the weakness of pity,' which might otherwise render the necessary severity against gross offenders difficult of execution: for commonly it is not cool reflection (though it should be so) which brings offenders to justice, but resentment and indignation against the wrong and its author. And men are often restrained from wrong by the fear of public or private resentment, when they would not be so restrained by any principle of virtue.

He concludes that the existence of such an emotion as indignation against wrong-doing is a corroborative proof that virtue is a real thing,—not the mere creation of human policy, as Hobbes would make it; and a warning that even our passions, much as we may abuse them, are implanted in our nature for wise ends.

Resentment being thus a natural affection, the duty

of forgiveness does not forbid the feeling itself, but only the excess or abuse of it; more especially retaliation and revenge, though 'custom and false honour' are in favour of these. For malice begets malice, and so aggravates evil. Resentment is in itself a painful remedy, both to the individual and the community, and therefore never to be applied wantonly, or indulged for its own sake, but only to produce some greater good. The gratification of other passions may sometimes be innocent, even when they do not serve the end for which they were implanted in our nature: but in this passion alone 'the gratification of it consists in producing misery;' and unless such misery be remedial—*i.e.*, calculated to deter from wrong or to prevent it—its production contradicts the general obligation to benevolence.

Even love of our enemies (which is practically the same as forgiveness of injuries) forms part of this general law of benevolence. But a reasonable exercise of resentment is not inconsistent with this, as we see in the case of parents towards their children: it is only when in excess that resentment becomes malice, and so destroys benevolence. And no amount of guilt, and no amount of wrong-doing, on the part of those whom we regard as enemies, can release us from this law. Love of our enemies does not mean 'that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection;' but, when stated reasonably, 'it is so far from being a rant, as it has been profanely called, that it is in truth the law of our nature.'

The true obstacle to our reception of this principle is that we are blinded by self-love, or rather self-partiality.

The language of objectors, if they would speak out, says Butler, comes to this: 'Mankind—that is, a creature defective and faulty—is the proper object of goodwill, whatever his faults are, when they respect others, but not when they respect me myself.' We imagine or greatly exaggerate injuries done to ourselves: and Butler expresses a hope—somewhat ironical in expression if not in intention—that some effect might be produced by disabusing men's minds on this point:—

'One would hope an intimation of this sort might be kindly received, and that people would be glad to find the injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due distance—*i.e.*, be really unprejudiced—we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this proper point of view we should likewise in all probability see something of these latter in ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind—in these cases it magnifies everything which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens everything amiss in ourselves.'

Further, the duty of forgiveness is urged from the consideration that the injury we resent, even if it has not its origin in inadvertence or misunderstanding, does not arise from any positive feeling of ill-will (of which,

it must be remembered, Butler does not admit the existence as an original principle of action), but from some form of passion or self-love—such as we ourselves are liable to. And again, he who has done the wrong is rather an object of compassion; 'for no one ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a much greater to himself.'

Finally, besides the Christian precept, which here as elsewhere he is careful not to press too far, we have the general presentiment natural to mankind, 'that we ourselves shall one time or other be dealt with, as we deal with others:' the equity of which we all admit.

The two sermons which follow on 'Love to God' are necessarily less ethical and more distinctly religious in tone. The author's intention seems to have been to treat the subject in a calm and practical spirit;—to make his protest at once against the enthusiasm of the French school of mystics, as represented by Madame Guyon, and in a less exaggerated shape by Fénelon, and against the contrary extreme, which he thought was the tendency of his own time, of insisting on 'a reasonable religion—so very reasonable as to have nothing to do with the heart and the affections.' Madame Guyon and her followers placed Christian perfection in the pure and disinterested love of God, without regard to future reward or punishment: and to this view Butler so far inclines, that in his preface to these sermons he insists that when we speak of the love of God, 'somewhat more must be meant than merely that we live in hope of rewards or fear of punishments from Him.'** And so here, in the opening of his sermon, he reminds us that 'a doctrine's having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve

the purposes of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it.' He argues that as we have some affections which rest entirely in their objects, as there are individuals whom we love without any ulterior views of our own interest, and as, if any of those individuals were perfect in goodness, in wisdom, and power, and in close relation with ourselves,—still more, if he were our guardian and governor,—this affection would be deeper and stronger still: so in our relations with God such feeling would rise to its highest. He is the highest object of such affection, or rather, of the several affections—love, reverence, fear, desire of approbation—which are supposed to exist already in our minds. In this our present imperfect state, such complex affection would result in a temper of perfect resignation—'such a loyalty of heart to the Governor of the universe as shall prevail over all sinister indirect desires of our own'—in consequence of our just conceptions of His nature and our sense of His presence: and devotion or worship would be this temper developed into action. Here, too, we seem to trace something of the shade of melancholy which tinged Butler's views. As he saw in man's nature more capacities for misery than happiness, and held that our aim in this life must be not so much to seek for happiness as to avoid suffering, so here his idea of a mind pervaded by the love of God has nothing in it of the rapture which more sanguine temperaments have expressed, and doubtless have experienced,—hardly anything even of the calm satisfaction and peace which the Christian philosopher would seem naturally to attach to a rightly placed affection,—but only 'resignation'—acquiescence in the Divine will, rather than implicit confidence in the Divine love. He

may probably have adopted this view from Shaftesbury, who appears to place his idea of piety in 'true resignation, or submission to the will and order of the Deity.'[1] It would be hardly fair, however, to measure Butler's private and personal feeling by the cautious and restrained expressions of so reserved a man in writing for the public.

He does, however, supplement this somewhat cold conclusion by holding out the prospect that, in the future and perfect state,—where we may be able to contemplate in their essence the wisdom and power of which in this world we see only the effects, and the goodness of which here we know so little in its original, though 'just men bear its resemblance,'—this temper of resignation will be developed into perfect satisfaction. That which might be enthusiasm here will there at least be reality.

'Nothing is more certain than that an infinite Being may Himself be, if He pleases, the supply to all the capacities of our nature. All the common enjoyments of life are from the faculties He hath endued us with, and the objects He hath made suitable to them. He may himself be to us infinitely more than all these; He may be to us all that we want. As our understanding can contemplate itself, and our affections be exercised upon themselves by reflection, so may each be employed in the same manner upon any other mind; and since the Supreme Mind, the Author and Cause of all things, is the highest possible object to Himself, He may be an adequate supply to all the faculties of our souls, a subject to our understanding, and an object to our affections.'

The sermon on 'The Ignorance of Man' is especially interesting, as containing many of the germs of the 'Analogy.' We know very little, says the preacher, even

[1] Inquiry Concerning Virtue, Book I. ch. iii. 3.

of the world around us—that very small portion of the great system of the universe which comes under our observation.

'It is indeed in general no more than effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with: for as to causes, they are as entirely in the dark as the most ignorant. What are the laws by which matter acts upon matter, but certain effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general rules? The real nature and essence of beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these things are so entirely out of our reach, that we have not the least glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves than we do of the world about us.'[1]

Yet, he proceeds to show, we can see enough of the relation which the several parts of the great scheme of Providence bear to each other, to be conscious that we cannot have a thorough knowledge of any one part without knowing the whole: and this 'should surely convince us that we are much less competent judges of the very small part that comes under our notice in this world than we are apt to imagine.' And this may furnish us with an answer to objections grounded on the seeming evils and irregularities in the government of the world. It may be that such ignorance is best for us.

'There possibly may be reasons which originally made it fit that many things should be concealed from us which we have perhaps natural capacities of understanding: many things concerning the designs, methods and ends of Divine

[1] He seems to have anticipated, in this remarkable passage, the arguments of Hume, that human reason cannot apprehend a cause—that experience teaches us the relations between cause and effect, but can go no further.

Providence in the government of the world. There is no manner of absurdity in supposing a veil on purpose drawn over some scenes of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the sight of which might some way or other strike us too strongly; or that better ends are designed and served by their being concealed, than could be by their being exposed to our knowledge.'

Such imperfect knowledge may even be a part of our probation. Perfect knowledge and irresistible evidence may be incompatible with a state of discipline and improvement. Ignorance, and limited powers of reason, may be a trial, in the same way as temptations and difficulties are. 'Less sensible evidence, with less difficulty in practice, is the same [he means, as a mode of probation] as more sensible evidence with greater difficulty in practice.' We shall find this suggestion expanded, and applied with great force, when in the 'Analogy' he argues that different characters may need different forms of trial.[1]

The consciousness of this ignorance should teach us to expect, in our inquiry about religion, to meet with difficulties and things which are to us mysterious: to inquire with any other expectation 'is not to inquire as a man, but as one of another order of creatures.' It should teach us, also, to be content with 'any evidence which is real.' Butler insists upon this in one of his most forcible passages:—

'I mention this as the contrary to a disposition, of which there are not wanting instances, to find fault with and reject evidence because it is not such as was desired. If a man were to walk by twilight, must he not follow his eyes as

[1] Part II. chap. vi.

much as if it were broad day and clear sunshine? Or if he were obliged to take a journey by night, would he not give heed to any light shining in the darkness, till the day should break and the day-star arise? It would not be altogether unnatural for him to reflect how much better it were to have daylight; he might perhaps have great curiosity to see the country round about him; he might lament that the darkness concealed many extended prospects from his eyes, and wish for the sun to draw away the veil; but how ridiculous would it be to reject with scorn and disdain the guidance and direction which that lesser light might afford him, because it was not the sun itself! If the make and constitution of man, the circumstances he is placed in, or the reason of things, affords the least hint or intimation that virtue is the law he is born under, scepticism itself should lead him to the most strict and inviolable practice of it; that he may not make the dreadful experiment of leaving the course of life marked out for him by nature, whatever that nature be, and entering paths of his own, of which he can know neither the dangers nor the end. For though no danger be seen, yet darkness, ignorance, and blindness are no manner of security.'

He concludes that we should apply ourselves to practice rather than to speculation :—

'If the proper happiness of man consisted in knowledge, considered as a possession or treasure, men who are possessed of the largest share would have a very ill time of it, as they would be infinitely more sensible than others of their poverty in this respect: thus he who increases knowledge would eminently "increase sorrow." Men of deep research and curious inquiry should just be put in mind not to mistake what they are doing. If their discoveries serve the cause of virtue and religion in the way of proof, motive to practice, or assistance in it, or if they tend to render life less unhappy, and promote its satisfactions, then they are most usefully employed; but bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is

of no manner of use any otherwise than as an entertainment or diversion.'

The science which really concerns us is 'the science of improving the temper and making the heart better.' And 'he that should find out one rule to assist us in this work would deserve infinitely better of mankind than all the improvers of other knowledge put together.' He concludes by recommending the cultivation of his favourite temper of 'absolute resignation'—resignation of the judgment as well as of the will.

The sermons on 'Self-Deceit' and on 'The Character of Balaam' (which latter may be said also to deal with one particular form of self-deceit) illustrate the author's ethical views in some of their bearings upon practice. In the first of these two sermons he shows that self-deceit may create in us a kind of false conscience. It is the result of an exaggerated self-love. Indeed, Butler goes so far as to assert here, in so many words, that 'vice in general consists in having an unreasonable and too great regard for ourselves in comparison of others.'[1] It is a reasonable self-love only which he will admit: he does not reprobate the feeling entirely, as Hutcheson does; nor yet admit it to be the ruling principle, like the Utilitarians. But he shows how, combined with any ruling passion, 'it may prejudice and darken the understanding itself.' And therefore, so far is self-partiality from extenuating guilt, that 'it is the greatest of all guilt in proportion to the degree it prevails, for

[1] He probably chooses here to state the case from a practical rather than from a philosophical point of view; asserting rather one of the common phases which vice assumes, than that which is its *essential* constituent.

it is a corruption of the whole moral character in its principle.' The province of self-deceit is more especially that debateable ground in morals, where evil cannot be exactly defined, but on which perhaps the greater portion of our social intercourse and duties are exercised. It is here that great latitude is left to us to determine each for ourselves, and consequently the greatest scope for self-deceit. Our best safeguard against it will be to watch carefully the weak point in our character, for it is on this side we shall surely be most liable to it; as Aristotle would have us, in seeking the happy mean, avoid that extreme to which we are naturally inclined.

He has a shrewd remark upon the fact that men are not uncommonly victims of self-deceit on one favourite point only; while on others their judgment, even in their own case, is fair and just enough.

'Hence arises that amazing incongruity and seeming inconsistency of character, from whence slight observers take it for granted that the whole is hypocritical and false, not being able otherwise to reconcile the several parts; whereas, in truth, there is real honesty, so far as it goes. There is such a thing as men's being honest to such a degree and in such respects, but no further; and this, as it is true, so it is absolutely necessary to be taken notice of and allowed them: such general and undistinguishing censure of their whole characters, as designing and false, being one main thing which confirms them in their self-deceit. They know that the whole censure is not true, and so take it for granted that no part of it is.'

He regards Balaam's conduct not as an instance where strong passion—'the brute force within'—prevails over the rightful supremacy of conscience; but as a kind of

voluntary obscuration of conscience by religious equivocation. When our first intuitive perception of duty is clear, 'doubt and deliberation is in itself dishonesty.' 'That which is called considering what is our duty in a particular case is very often nothing but endeavouring to explain it away.' The lover of aphorisms might make an interesting collection from the pages of Butler.

Any notice of these sermons would be incomplete which did not include that on 'The Government of the Tongue;' though it is, in fact, a serious essay on conversation rather than a sermon in the recognised sense. Butler takes as his text the warning of St James about bridling the tongue, and explains at the outset that the vice which the Apostle meant to censure was not lying, or slander, or evil-speaking, but simply 'talkativeness'—which may, if indulged, easily run into all or any of the others. The thing reproved, he considers, is the love of 'talking for its own sake.' Such talkers are so eager to engage attention by any means, that they will speak either good or evil, truth or falsehood, according as one or other has most chance of being listened to.

When he proceeds to tell us in what 'bridling the tongue' consists, he is not too severe upon ordinary social conversation. He maintains his theory that man is essentially a social animal. The first and most important use of speech is, of course, to communicate our thoughts and wishes. But there are secondary uses of all our faculties: they are meant to minister to our enjoyment as well as to our necessity.

'The secondary use of speech is to please and be entertaining to each other in conversation. This is in every respect

allowable and right: it unites men closer in alliances and friendships; gives us a fellow-feeling of the prosperity and unhappiness of each other; and is in several respects serviceable to virtue, and to promote good behaviour in the world. And provided there be not too much time spent in it—if it were to be considered only in the way of gratification and delight—men must have strange notions of God and of religion to think that He can be offended with it, or that it is in any way consistent with the strictest virtue. But the truth is, such sort of conversation, though it has no particular good tendency, yet it has a general good one: it is social and friendly, and tends to promote humanity, good-nature, and civility.'

He gives his cautions as to the due government of the tongue under three several heads. The first is the value of silence—especially when a man has nothing to say, or nothing but what were better left unsaid. The following passage is admirable in its quiet satire, however strange it might sound from a modern pulpit. The preacher is himself aware that many persons would think the subject 'too little to come into a serious discourse;' but, as he truly observes, 'the greatest evils in life have had their rise from somewhat which was thought of too little importance to be attended to.'

'The wise man observes that "there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence." One meets with people in the world who seem never to have made the last of these observations; and yet these great talkers do not at all speak from their having anything to say, as every sentence shows, but only from their inclination to be talking: their conversation is merely an exercise of the tongue,—no other human faculty has any share in it. It is strange these persons can help reflecting that, unless they have in truth a superior capacity, and are in an extraordinary manner furnished for conversa-

tion, if they are entertaining, it is at their own expense. Is it possible that it should never come into people's thoughts to suspect whether or no it be to their advantage to show so very much of themselves? "Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace; and it should be your wisdom!"[1] Remember likewise, there are persons who love fewer words; an inoffensive sort of people, and who deserve some regard, though of too still and composed tempers for you. Of this number was the son of Sirach; for he plainly speaks from experience when he says, "As hills of sand are to the steps of the aged, so is one of many words to a quiet man." But one would think it should be obvious to every one that when they are in company with their superiors of any kind,—in years, knowledge, and experience; when proper and useful subjects are discoursed of which they cannot bear a part in,—that these are times for silence, when they should learn to hear and be attentive, at least in their turn. It is, indeed, a very unhappy way these people are in: they in a manner cut themselves out from all advantage of conversation, except that of being entertained with their own talk; their business in coming into company not being at all to be informed, to hear, to learn, but to display themselves, or rather to exert their faculty, and talk without any design at all.'

His second caution is, that such conversation should in all cases be what he calls 'indifferent'—which he explains to mean that it should in no way be 'offensive to virtue, religion, or good manners.' And his third and last is a caution against allowing it to run too much upon one very attractive subject, which he will scarcely admit as coming under the term 'indifferent,' because the talk upon it 'almost perpetually runs into somewhat criminal.' We are not, he argues, sufficiently 'neutral' to trust ourselves to discuss our neigh-

[1] Job xiii. 5.

bours freely. 'There is perpetually (and often it is not attended to) a rivalship among people of one kind or another, in respect to wit, beauty, learning, fortune; and that one thing will insensibly influence them to speak to the disadvantage of others, even where there is no formed malice or ill design.' He admits the impossibility of excluding this tempting subject from conversation, and is content to remind us that what we say on such occasions may be important in its results: that we should confine ourselves to fact, and not indulge in opinions. At the same time, we are not to shrink from unmasking hypocrisy, or denouncing injustice, when there is need for it in the real interests of truth and justice—though he is well aware that those 'who are given to scandal and detraction may make an ill use of this last observation.'

CHAPTER IV.

COMPARATIVE VIEWS OF CONSCIENCE.

It will have been seen that Butler, in his investigation of the foundations of morals, does not use the *a priori* method of inquiry; that is, he does not examine what he calls 'the abstract relations of things,' their immutable 'truth' or 'fitness,' as laid down by such writers as Cudworth, Clarke, and Wollaston. He examines what he calls 'human nature'—the constitution of the human mind, as we discover it from dispassionate observation of ourselves and others. Somewhere deep down in ourselves he thought we should find those principles of action which other moralists had sought to discover in theoretical speculations as to the infinite, the eternal, and the immutable, which lie to a great extent outside the little world of man, and beyond his reason. At the same time it must be remembered that he by no means ignores the value of the other method: he is careful to observe, towards the close of his argument in the 'Analogy'—'I have omitted a thing of the utmost importance, which I do believe,—the moral fitness or unfitness of actions prior to all will whatever.' He is as fully persuaded as any *a priori* reasoner can be, of the exist-

ence of order and system in nature: what he does protest against, with all his heart, is that men should seek to build a world, or a scheme of moral being, upon hypothesis—the mere creation, as he would say, of their own fancies—and not on observation, or 'things as they are.' His inquiry is what human nature is, not what it might be, or, as we think, ought to be. His peculiar claim as a moral teacher is his having placed in the clearest light the action of the human conscience; and his powerful vindication of its moral supremacy. Its position, in his view, is wholly distinct from all other sentiments, because its judgments carry with them a sense of obligation. It is not that Butler was himself the originator of such a view, but he has simplified and reduced it to a practical system of morality, easily understood. He was the first to show clearly that we have what may be called a consciousness in ourselves of conscience as a ruling principle. So strong are his utterances on this point, that he is said to have gone so far as to deify conscience: and certainly he recognises in its silent voice of authority what Cicero calls 'the god ruling within us.' He has also been charged with adopting an arbitrary and fantastic psychology—'too mechanical,' Mr Arnold calls it: but may not these epithets be applied, in a certain sense, to all psychological systems? The facts of human life, and the motives of human conduct, whatever they may be, are antecedent to any systems of ethics: and the terms by which we express the abstractions gathered from any examination of these must always be arbitrary, and may have the appearance of being fantastic, to any reader who does not agree in the propriety of their application. It would be much

too large a question to discuss how far such a character may possibly belong to all attempts, however elaborate and complete in their method, to map out, as it were, and distinguish sharply by special names, all the faculties, motives, and phenomena of the human mind. The office which Butler has assigned to Conscience, and the supremacy of such a moral faculty in the hierarchy of human nature, is but the development of Plato's enthronement of Reason as lawful sovereign in the soul of man, where it should rule as in a well-ordered commonwealth, while Desire should obey, and the Passions be held in leash, 'as the dog is by the shepherd,—so that Virtue will be a harmony of the soul, while Vice is anarchy and discord; and in the case of the soul, as in the case of the body, if the constitution be tampered with, all life goes wrong. In this recognition of the rightful authority of conscience, Butler has been followed, though of course quite independently, by Kant, who assigns to conscience the enforcement of the higher kind of duties—'virtue-duties,' as he calls them. Amongst later English writers on ethics, Bentham does not admit the existence of such a principle at all; and Mill explains it as a complex feeling, more or less artificial, made up of associations and early recollections,—a compound of love and fear, and self-esteem and desire of approbation: while Bain would trace its existence to the rules of conduct which have been gradually adopted for the preservation of society, from which is generated what he calls 'an ideal avoidance' of such conduct as would be liable to punishment, as contravening those rules: so that 'authority or punishment is the commencement of that state of mind recognised under the various

names of Conscience, the Moral Sense, the Sentiment of Obligation,'[1]—which would seem to be going back very nearly to Hobbes's position, that morality is the creature of law.

Butler was prepared to meet the real difficulty which lies upon the threshold of his doctrine,—that conscience is a shifting rule, varying with the various stages of civilisation—with age, with country, and even with climate. The standard of the internal nature of man is not 'exactly settled,' he admits: neither is that of his external shape and stature. Yet practically we all understand what is meant when we speak of the one or the other. He is even prepared to allow with Wollaston that conscience has its rudimentary stage, and that morality has therefore been progressive. But he is scarcely so bold or so clear on this point as we might wish him to be. Hartley, with whom perhaps Butler would not have altogether disagreed, has stated this undoubted truth more distinctly. 'The rule of life drawn from the practice and opinions of mankind corrects and improves itself perpetually, till at last it determines entirely for virtue, and excludes all kinds and conditions of vice.'[2] Butler has something to the same effect, when he says that some lessons of life 'are learnt so insensibly and so perfectly as to be mistaken perhaps for instinct, though they are the effect of long experience and exercise,—as much so as language.'[3]

Mackintosh has well compared this growth of conscience to the gradual development of the faculties in the individual, in the progress from childhood to matur-

[1] Emotions and Will, p. 481.
[2] Essay on Man, i. 207.
[3] Analogy, Part I. chap. v.

ity: the moral conscience of society ripens 'as children in their growth tend to the opinions as well as to the strength of adults.' And though this may appear at first sight to weaken the presumption in favour of an intuitive moral faculty, it hardly does so, if we admit that the whole principle of growth is ever towards perfection, not deterioration; and that the development of the conscience, or whatever name it may be called by, in the direction of virtue, not vice,—good, and not evil,—is a strong witness in favour of the innate existence in man's nature of such a rule of action, however rudimentary and imperfect may be the state in which we find it in certain stages of society, or under certain unfavourable circumstances. But this theory of growth has been carried out more thoroughly by several later writers, under whose analysis conscience becomes no longer an intuitive principle, but the gradual product of human experience—a conscience 'of the race, not of the individual.'

Still, the apparently shifting nature of this moral rule presents a very real difficulty. This rightful supremacy of conscience is grand in theory, and seems to be in harmony with the belief and the observation of all thoughtful men, as it is also with the conclusions of the great thinkers of antiquity. But are we to take it to mean that every rational agent possesses, in his own individual conscience, an infallible rule which is to guide him in all questions of morality; and that so long as he follows this, he is safe to do what is right? So far, no doubt, as it affects man's responsibility as an accountable being, such a statement might be sufficient. The enlightened and the unenlightened conscience are

not to be judged by the same rule: there are acts which involve the deepest moral guilt when committed by a civilised man, to which in the case of the savage we should attach no such character at all. Here, by a remarkable inversion, the rule of Scripture is more liberal than the rule of morality: 'To him that knoweth to do good and doeth it not, to him it is sin.' But this ought not to content, and will not content, the ethical inquirer into the foundations of morals, whose business is not to judge or to punish individuals, but to discover, if it may be, the essential nature of right and wrong. He has to examine the objective moral quality of actions, and the rule by which this is to be tested,—not their subjective guilt or excusableness in certain persons under certain circumstances. If conscience is to be the judge, where and in whom is this conscience to be found? We are much in the same position, after all, in which Aristotle found himself, and have to refer for our moral standard to that which the ideal man—the man who is supposed to have arrived already at some state which allows us to pronounce him 'excellent' or 'judicious'—shall lay down. Mackintosh remarks that in all ethical inquiries there are two distinct questions: firstly, what is the quality in any act which leads men to pronounce it virtuous? secondly, what is the nature of the feelings with which they regard it?—and that while Butler has answered the second question completely, to the first he has given no real answer at all. There seems a certain amount of truth in the strictures made by the same writer, who is here followed by Mr Leslie Stephen, upon Butler's theory of Conscience (as they might be made upon some defini-

tions of Aristotle), that it is arguing in a circle: that he first defines virtuous acts to be those which conscience approves, and then makes conscience the faculty which determines and approves virtuous acts. Must we fall back then, after all, upon the *a priori* view—the necessary existence of certain truths in morals corresponding to the axioms of mathematics, and look there for this essence of morality which is continually escaping us?

Mackintosh also considers Butler's statement deficient in so far as he has omitted to lay down the grounds of the supremacy which he claims for conscience: and Whewell questions the proper use of the word 'supremacy' at all, and would substitute for it the term 'authority,' as limiting the action of conscience to a decision on moral questions which may be disputed and overborne. He would define conscience as 'the faculty or habit of referring our acts to a moral standard:'[1] this moral standard requiring the exercise of reason for its discovery and application; which appears to be deposing conscience from the sovereignty which Butler claims for it, and relegating it to a mere ministerial office.

The divergence between Butler's views and those of another distinguished moralist of later date who, like him, treated moral philosophy as 'the science which teaches men their duty and the reasons of it,' deserves at least some mention. The popularity and influence of Paley's philosophy threw into the shade for many years, especially at the University of Cambridge, the study of Butler. It was not until the year 1837 that, chiefly by the influence of Whewell and Julius Hare, Butler's Sermons found a distinct place among the subjects of

[1] Elements of Morality, p. 359.

examination. Paley's style was more attractive, and his conclusions more plausible. The absence of uniformity in the operation of the moral sense, as exemplified in the varying code of morality in different nations, is, in Paley's view, a proof that such sense is not instinctive, but the result of a process of experience and imitation. The sentiment of approbation, on which Butler lays such stress as an indication of an inherent moral quality in actions, Paley considers to be merely entertained, in its origin, towards qualities in others which we believe to be beneficial to ourselves, and to have grown into a settled principle by an insensible process of association. 'There is nothing so soon made,' he says, 'as a maxim.' He also assumes that all men's passions and affections are the same in kind, though they differ 'in continuance and intensity;' while Butler's theory of the authority of conscience rests upon a difference in kind as well as in strength. Paley's moral rule may claim at least to be more clearly and tersely expressed than Butler's: 'Actions are to be estimated by their tendency. Whatever is expedient is right. It is the utility of any moral rule alone which constitutes the obligation of it.'[1] This author's philosophy has been characterised as 'moderate' utilitarianism; but it is somewhat difficult to see how any doctrine could be laid down more broadly or more distinctly. Virtue he defines as 'the doing good to mankind, in obedience to the will of God, and for the sake of everlasting happiness:' which last, as a motive of action, does much to weaken its character of disinterestedness. The chief difference between Paley and Bentham seems to be, that while the former goes on to add

[1] Moral Philosophy, chap. vi.

to his ethical standard this reference to the 'will of God' and 'everlasting happiness,' Bentham practically contents himself with the test of utility:[1] and, clearly, so far as a mere ethical system has to be constructed, the appeal to theology, thrown in as it were by way of make-weight, appears somewhat out of place. The same kind of reference is made occasionally by Butler: but then he was professedly writing sermons, and not attempting a scheme of 'Moral Philosophy.' Happiness, in Paley's view, consists mainly in good health, good spirits, congenial occupation, and a prudent course of life: with all which moral considerations would seem to have very little to do. Nor is it a very elevated philosophy that is content with the conclusion (which, after all, the author does very little to prove) that 'vice has *no advantage* over virtue, even with respect to this world's happiness.' Butler has been claimed as the exponent of a compound utilitarian scheme, which regards the promotion of general happiness as the single inherent characteristic of virtuous actions. It is true that he asserts that 'virtue and happiness cannot contradict each other,' and even admits that 'when we sit down in a cool hour we cannot justify to ourselves this [the pursuit of virtue] or any other pursuit till we are convinced it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it;'[2] and this has been considered, as perhaps it is, somewhat inconsistent with his general argument for an independent morality. But, as Mr Leslie Stephen, the ablest and the fairest of Butler's adverse critics, candidly admits,

[1] He does indeed recognise amongst his four 'sanctions' the 'religious;' but it finds little place in his general argument.

[2] Sermon xi.

'this view might be excised with benefit to the general argument.'[1] Butler feels, as Aristotle did, the difficulty which experience, at least in certain cases, throws in the way of the theory that 'virtue is happiness;' he feels that happiness can hardly be predicated of the man, however virtuous, who meets with 'the misfortunes of Priam.'[2] But the moralist who maintains that well-doing, *as such*, gives us satisfaction at least in some instances, whereas ill-doing, as such, never does, is surely the advocate of a very different utilitarianism from Paley's.

[1] History of English Thought, vol. ii. p. 50.
[2] Ethics, i. 10. 14.

CHAPTER V.

RELIGIOUS CONTROVERSY OF THE AGE.

THE age in which Butler lived might be called, without any shade of satire, the Age of Reason. It had succeeded an age of comparative indifference to all serious thought. There was scepticism enough in both; but while the scepticism of the Restoration was rather the contemptuous ignoring of the restrictions of morality and religion by a profligate society, the scepticism of Butler's time was intellectual and acute. It was connected, no doubt, with a decline in religious feeling and the prevalence of a lax tone of morality. Butler speaks of this in a tone almost of despair in his charge to his Durham clergy.

It is impossible for me to forbear lamenting with you the general decay of religion in this nation, which is now observed by every one, and has been for some time the complaint of all serious persons. The influence of it is more and more wearing out of the minds of men, even of those who do not pretend to enter into speculations upon the subject; but the number of those who do, and who profess themselves unbelievers, increases, and with their numbers their zeal. Zeal, it is natural to ask, for what? Why, truly, *for* noth-

ing, but against everything that is good and sacred among us. . . . For as different ages have been distinguished by different sorts of particular errors and vices, the deplorable distinction of ours is an avowed scorn of religion in some, and a growing disregard to it in the generality.'

If this picture of his own times might be thought to take its colour in some degree from the despondent temperament of a man who had held it 'too late to support a falling Church,' we may turn to that which we find drawn by a man of very different character, Bishop Warburton, in the dedication of his great work, the 'Divine Legation.'

'I had lived to see what lawgivers have always seemed to dread, as the certain prognostic of public ruin, that fatal crisis when religion hath lost its hold on the minds of a people. . . . The most painful circumstance in this relation is that the mischief began amongst our friends; by men who loved their country, but were too eagerly intent on one part only of their object—the security of its civil liberty.'

Swift declared that, so far as his observation went, 'hardly more than two or three persons in the army and navy' had any belief in religion, and that 'of people of quality great numbers openly avow their disbelief in all revelation.' Hartley, the physician and philosopher, writing a few years later, speaks not only of 'the great growth of atheism and infidelity,' but of 'the open and abandoned immorality of both sexes, especially in the high ranks of life,' 'the sordid and avowed self-interest' of public men, and 'the licentiousness and contempt of every kind of authority, divine or human, notorious in inferiors of all ranks.'[1]

[1] Observations on Man, vol. ii. p. 441.

Warburton, in the dedication just quoted, goes on to attribute this prevalence of unbelief to the hostile attitude assumed by the Church—'or at least that party of Churchmen which had usurped the name,' the Jacobite clergy—to the principles of the late Revolution. This, he contends, had discredited the Church, and with the Church religion generally, in the eyes of the people; especially since the enemies of all religion had hastened to make common cause with the opponents of the Tory High Church party. The sober friends of civil freedom were now, he thinks, finding out the mistake they had made in entangling themselves with such allies. 'In their endeavours to take off the influence of a Church, or rather of a party of Churchmen, inauspicious to a free state, they had occasioned at least the loosening of all the ties which till then religion had on the minds of the populace, and which till then statesmen had never thought were the best security magistrates had for their obedience.' But while Warburton and his school attributed this neglect of religion and depravation of morals to the prevailing distrust of the High Church Jacobites, these latter on their part threw the blame on the latitudinarianism which reigned amongst Church dignitaries; for most of the bishops were Hanoverian, while the doctrines of non-resistance and divine right continued to be held by a majority of the parochial clergy. The result of this conflict of opinion could not but be disastrous to religion itself.

But in fact the bonds of authority, whether intellectual, moral, civil, or religious, had been loosened altogether by the events of the last half-century. A second revolution had practically destroyed the old belief in the

divine authority of kings, as the Reformation had long since destroyed the sovereign authority of the Church; the bitter struggle of religious parties, and the persecuting spirit shown on both sides, had made men of the world doubt, as Montaigne had doubted after the war of the League, whether the dogmas of religion were anything more than a party cry. No wonder that the authority of Scripture came to be openly questioned. Reason was appealed to in its stead, and men boldly claimed to judge of the former by the latter. Gradually was developed that spirit of independent inquiry, called in the seventeenth century Rationalism (though the term did not then bear the anti-religious sense now attached to it), which early in the eighteenth century became known as 'Free-thinking,' and whose most prominent representatives are usually classed under the name of Deists. Those to whom the term is fairly applicable admitted the existence of the Deity, of what they called 'natural' religion, and of a moral conscience in man, while they denied, either wholly or as to its miraculous features, the Christian revelation. Deism may be said to have taken its rise with Lord Herbert of Cherbury and Hobbes of Malmesbury, in the reign of Charles I., and to have ended with Bolingbroke and Hume. Its greatest development was in the period following the Revolution of 1688, when we find it embodied in the writings of John Toland, Anthony Collins, Lord Shaftesbury, and Matthew Tindal. But it must be borne in mind that there was no special sect of Deists, and that the name was often very vaguely applied as a controversial stigma. Locke—and even Cudworth, Clarke, and Tillotson—were

all called Deists by their enemies, though they would certainly have objected to be classed with Toland or Tindal. Shaftesbury himself repudiates the use of the term as 'set in opposition to Christianity;' he would probably have accepted for himself the designation of sceptic in the real sense of the word. How far he was or was not an unbeliever is difficult to collect from his writings, amidst the scoffing irony directed by one who avowedly made ridicule the test of truth against the externals of religion as they were presented in his day, and the tone of critical indifference, whether genuine or assumed, in which he discusses such questions as miracles and sacraments.

Yet it is curious to note how, in spite of this practical contempt for religion, accompanied as it was with satire of every kind heaped upon the clergy and received with delight, an open denial of Christianity was reckoned to be at least bad manners, and those who attacked it were not unfairly accused of doing so in a covert and disingenuous way.

Previous to the growth of this disposition to reject authority, and to subject all questions to the decision of reason, morals and religion had been supposed to rest upon the same basis. Hitherto, revelation was the recognised foundation both of moral and of spiritual truths. Gradually all this was changed. 'Free inquiry' was applied alike to the sources of both; and the result, in some of not the least acute minds of the day, was the practical divorce of morality from religion. It was not that the two were set in opposition one against the other; but Scripture was no longer to be appealed to for the laws or the sanctions of morality. These were

held to be antecedent to, and independent of, revelation of any kind; and revelation so far was held unnecessary, of no binding authority,—and, where such reasoning was pushed boldly to its conclusion, not a divine revelation in any sense at all. Whatever in Scripture was found to be in accordance with reason,—or, in other words, agreeable to the religion of nature,—the deistical writers were content to accept; whatever was not so, they rejected. Under this latter head they classed miracles generally, and also, by consequence, the doctrine of the atonement. Locke, while he belonged to the school of Rationalism, so far as that he fully recognised the appeal to the light of reason, yet maintained that Christianity was reasonable. 'Reason,' said he, 'is natural revelation. . . . Revelation is natural reason enlarged by a new set of discoveries communicated by God immediately, which reason vouches the truth of.' Toland (who was originally an Irish Catholic),[1] in a volume entitled 'Christianity not Mysterious,' published in 1696, carried out Locke's propositions to what was perhaps their legitimate conclusion, and argued that as there was in Christianity nothing contrary to reason, so there was nothing in it that was above reason, and that 'no Christian doctrine can properly be called a mystery;' nay, that Christianity does not lay claim to any 'mysteries,' in our sense of the word,—that such sense as is commonly attached to it was borrowed from paganism, and is of comparatively modern introduction. This

[1] An illustration of the way in which theological questions were at this time discussed in all circles may be found in the anecdote (whether true or false) that Toland was converted by the arguments which he heard in coffee-houses.

almost forgotten book of Toland's produced an extraordinary sensation at the time. It was thought of sufficient importance to be condemned in succession by the grand juries of Middlesex and Dublin, and by the Irish Parliament, and only escaped the verdict of the English Convocation by a legal technicality. No less than one hundred and fifteen replies to it are said to have appeared—all of which are also happily forgotten. Of Anthony Collins's 'Discourse on Free-thinking' (in which the technical use of the term 'Free-thinker' is said first to occur) not much need be said here; or of Woolston's grossly irreverent 'Discourses on Miracles,' though Voltaire declares that of this last work more than thirty thousand copies were rapidly sold, and the pens of no less than four bishops were exercised in reply to what may charitably be considered the production of a disordered mind.

Such were some of the controversial works which formed the literary topics of the day, and which could not fail to arouse the interest of a mind like Butler's. But the book which he is generally supposed to have had specially in view, and to which his 'Analogy' is intended as a reply, is a work which had been given to the press soon after the Rolls Sermons, by Matthew Tindal, fellow of All Souls' College, called 'Christianity as old as the Creation: or, the Gospel a Republication of the Religion of Nature.' Tindal attacked the proofs of revelation, especially its attestation by miracles, and denied that we could rest on any safe assurance of its having been transmitted to us in an authentic shape. He asserted that what was claimed as revelation was uncertain and obscure; its views of the Deity derogatory

to what we conceive of the divine nature; its precepts not clearly intelligible to the multitude, as must be the case with all arbitrary and positive precepts, and sometimes contrary to natural morality; and that the want of universality in its publication, and the corruptions introduced even at an early date, invalidated its divine origin. Such were the chief positions maintained by Tindal in the first portion of his work, in which the argument was mainly destructive. The second part, in which he proposed to show that all the vital truths contained in Christianity were 'as old as the creation,' he did not live to complete.

But it was not only in books that such questions were discussed. There was a great deal of free-talking as well as free-thinking; nor was it confined by any means to such learned circles as Queen Caroline's supper-table. Waterland, writing while Butler was preaching at the Rolls Chapel, says that the controversy on the Trinity 'was spread abroad among all ranks and degrees of men, and the Athanasian Creed became the subject of common and ordinary conversation.' Butler himself, in his charge to his clergy, cautions them against rashly engaging in argument with 'sceptical and profane men, who are apt to bring up this subject at meetings of entertainment.' Bishop Berkeley, a few years later, says that 'in a drawing-room, a coffee-house, a chocolate-house, a tavern, or a groom-porter's,' it was 'the custom for polite persons to speak freely on all subjects, religious, moral, or political.' And valuable as Butler's book was, and is, as a reply to the objections against Christianity as they were formally stated by controversial writers, they had an especial value as bearing upon the

doubts and difficulties that were current in all men's mouths. He told a friend that his plan in the composition of it had been 'to endeavour to answer, as he went along, every possible objection that might occur to any one against any position of his in his book.'[1]

The title of Butler's work is frequently misquoted—probably because of its length. It is not 'The Analogy of Natural and Revealed Religion,'—which would imply their relations one to the other,—but 'The Analogy of Religion, Natural and Revealed, to the Constitution and Course of Nature;' Natural Religion forming the subject of the first part of the work, and Revealed Religion of the second. As in his Sermons he had examined the moral constitution of man, considered as a social being, so in this, his later work, he has analysed man's spiritual constitution, as placed in a state of probation here, to be perfected in a future existence. He adopted as his motto a passage from Quintilian, in which the analogical method of reasoning is briefly defined.[2] Mill says it may be reduced to the following formula: 'Two things resemble each other in one or more respects—a certain proposition is true of the one, therefore it is true of the other.' Its value depends (he says again) 'on the extent of ascertained resemblance compared with the amount of ascertained difference.' Coplestone says that analogy is 'not a similarity of two things, but of two relations;' and this appears to describe more nearly the mode in which Butler applies it,

[1] Bartlett's Life, p. 50.

[2] 'Ejus [Analogiæ] hæc vis est, ut id quod dubium est ad aliquid simile, de quo non quæritur, referat, ut incerta certis probet.'—Quint. Inst. Orat., I. vi.

though he gives no definition of it himself, and seems practically to extend it to probable reasoning of any kind.[1]

His method is like Bacon's, to whom Chalmers has compared him—*i. e.*, so far as analogy resembles induction, of which it may be said to be an imperfect kind: it is the method of experience as opposed to hypothesis. He argues from what we know to what we do not know —from the acknowledged truths of nature to the probable truths of revelation. He postulates from his readers thus much: that there is an intelligent Author of nature (this would be admitted by the Deists, to whom his arguments are chiefly addressed); that human knowledge is imperfect (and this, in his view, lies at the root of most of the real difficulties); and that his opponent shall be content to proceed upon principles of reason. Like Aristotle, he has no mind to argue with inconsequent people.

The motive of his work is thus pointedly stated by himself—not without a vein of sarcasm—in his 'Advertisement' to the first edition:—

'It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be

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[1] Dr Hampden states the form of analogical reasoning thus:—

'Whatever belongs to this particular (or to these several particulars) belongs to any particular of the same class; this [some property inferred from observation] belongs to this particular; therefore, the same property belongs to this other particular of the same class.'

'Like Induction, Analogy can only pretend at best to a high degree of probability: it may have a high degree of certainty, but it never can reach to necessity.'—Sir W. Hamilton.

'Analogy is the soul of Induction.'—Baden Powell.

fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world. 'On the contrary, thus much at least will be here found, not taken for granted, but proved, that any reasonable man, who will thoroughly consider the matter, may be as much assured as he is of his own being, that it is not, however, so clear a case that there is nothing in it. There is, I think, strong evidence of its truth; but it is certain no one can, upon principles of reason, be satisfied of the contrary. And the practical consequence to be drawn from this is not attended to by every one who is concerned in it.'

CHAPTER VI.

ANALOGY OF NATURAL RELIGION TO THE COURSE OF NATURE.

THE opening words of the introductory chapter of the 'Analogy' warn the reader what he may and what he must not expect in the way of proof, and limit distinctly the scope of the argument. 'Probable evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this,—that it admits of degrees, and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty to the very lowest presumption.' And—'even a low presumption often repeated will amount even to moral certainty.' Butler is perfectly candid as to the nature of the mode of proof which he is adopting.

'Probable evidence, in its very nature, affords but an imperfect kind of information; and is to be considered as relative only to beings of limited capacities. For nothing which is the possible object of knowledge, whether past, present, or future, can be probable to an infinite Intelligence; since it cannot but be discerned absolutely as it is in itself, certainly true, or certainly false. But to *us*, PROBABILITY IS THE VERY GUIDE OF LIFE.'[1]

[1] Mr Gladstone, in his essay on 'The Law of Probable Evidence

In practical questions, prudence and interest constantly oblige us to take the side on which stands the balance of probability, 'even though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth.' Nay, when the question is very important, the prudent man will act upon what seems less than an even chance. Such is his argument, which perhaps he might well have carried further. For after all, even physical science rests upon probable evidence as truly as moral science does, and the accuracy of the perceptions of sense is based upon assumption as much as the truth of our moral and religious instincts.

He proceeds to take as his text an observation of Origen,[1]—that 'he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of nature.' And so, Butler adds on his own part,—'he who denies the Scripture to have been from God upon account of those difficulties, may for the very same reason deny the world to have been formed by Him.' But if we find that the course of nature, as known to us by experience, is analogous to the scheme of providence made known to us by revelation, it is a strong presumption that they have the same author. That there is an Author of nature is assumed as granted: so far, the writer and those to

in its relation to Conduct,' quotes very appositely to this statement of Butler a passage from Voltaire, 'On Probabilities in Judicial Questions,'—'Almost the whole of human life turns on probabilities. . . . It is necessary, therefore, for our nature, weak, blind, and ever liable to error as it is, to study probabilities as carefully as we study arithmetic or geometry.'

[1] Philocalis, p. 23.

whom he addresses himself are supposed to stand on the same basis of belief. Consequently, it must be borne in mind that the argument of the treatise contains no answer at all to the Atheist. This has been urged as detracting from its value as a work upon the evidences of religion; but an author can hardly be fairly charged with not having done what he does not profess to attempt.

We are to compare, then, 'the known constitution and course of things with what is said to be the moral system of nature;' and note the analogy between what we find in nature, and what we believe and expect in religion. We shall thus find, the author thinks, that 'the system of religion, both natural and revealed, considered only as a system, and prior to any proof of it, is not a subject of ridicule, unless that of nature be so too;' and this analogy will supply an answer to all objections against the system of religion, and, though in a less degree, to objections against the proof of it; 'for objections against a proof, and objections against what is said to be proved, are different things.'

The very notion of a divine government, implied in the notion of religion in general, must rest, as he assumes, on the existence of a future state; the credibility of this he accordingly proceeds to discuss in his first chapter. The various changes in ourselves from infancy to maturity, and the transformations which take place in the case of many animals, make it probable that we may exist hereafter in a state as different from the present as that is from our past. The possession of living powers now is a presumption that we shall retain them after death, unless death can be shown to destroy them. Of this we have no proof, either in the 'reason of things,'

—because we do not know what death is, or on what the existence of these living powers depend; or from the analogy of nature, because even in the case of animals there is 'not even the slightest presumption that they ever lose their living powers.' Death does indeed destroy the '*sensible* proof' of such possession; but beyond that we know nothing. We only *imagine* death will destroy them. But we must listen to reason —not to imagination.

Death is not the destruction of the living being, because that implies that such being is 'compounded, and therefore discerptible.' But consciousness is indivisible, and therefore the conscious being must be indivisible too: this 'has been argued,' he says, 'and, for anything appearing to the contrary, justly.' (He is sparing, as usual, of direct references, but he has Clarke's letters to Dodwell in his mind, probably, rather than Descartes, by whom this distinction between the 'discerptible' body and the indivisible and therefore indestructible mind is drawn.) We ourselves may exist out of bodies as well as in them. This 'absolute oneness of the living agent' cannot, he admits, be proved experimentally; but the fact that men lose their limbs by amputation, and that bodies undergo a gradual flux (amounting, as physiologists tell us, to a total change within a certain period), without losing their identity, is a strong presumption in its favour. Our real selves are independent of matter; and our organs of sense, perception, and motion, are indeed only instruments (as much as eye-glasses are) by which the conscious being acts. Their dissolution does not imply the destruction of the being himself. It is the

very argument of Plato in the 'Alcibiades'—that the whole body is the mere instrument of man, and that 'the man and his body are two different things.'[1] That this argument applies equally to brutes, Butler will not admit to be a real objection. They *may*, he conceives, have latent powers, like infants; or they may have an immortality without them: in any case, we are entirely ignorant in the matter. And here again, as very frequently, Butler follows Clarke, who had met the objection in a similar way in his answer to Anthony Collins, who maintained, with Dodwell, the startling doctrine of the natural mortality of the human soul without baptism. Clarke—and perhaps Butler—was evidently inclined to admit the possibility of a future life for the brute creation.[2] It must be observed that he does not here enter upon the question of the immateriality of the soul: his argument in favour of its indestructibility will apply equally well, as Dr Hampden has remarked, whatever theory as to its nature be adopted.

But, if death does not destroy the living being, still, may it not destroy our present powers of reflection? His answer is, the body is not necessary for the exercise of these: as we reflect independently of our

[1] Alcibiades, i. s. 51. Aristotle (De Animâ, ii. 2.) draws the same distinction between 'the immortal and the corruptible.'

[2] 'That man does not do any great honour either to God or to the Christian religion, who will contend that through a boundless eternity there shall never exist anything in the immense universe but what must needs partake either of the happiness or misery of mankind.'—Clarke, Reply to Collins. Descartes, when pressed with the objection that his arguments against the intelligence of animals would apply equally to infants, replied that he would not have believed that these latter had souls, but that he saw their development in the adult.

senses, these may be destroyed and yet reflection remain; and as disease often does not in its progress affect our intellectual powers, there is no presumption that it will eventually destroy them.

Nor is there any reason to conclude that it involves even the suspension of them.

'Nay, for aught we know of ourselves—of our present life and of death—death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life, as our birth does; a state in which our capacities, and sphere of perception and of action, may be much greater than at present. For as our relation to our external organs of sense renders us capable of existing in our present state of sensation, so it may be the only natural hindrance to our existing, immediately and of course, in a higher state of reflection. The truth is, reason does not at all show us in what state death naturally leaves us.'

In any case, the suspension and the destruction of a faculty are two very different things.

So the change which death makes in us may be as natural as our birth. And this new state may be a social one, and governed by fixed laws of perfect wisdom. And though all this amounts only to credibility, it is as sufficient for the practical purposes of religion as demonstrative proof.

Before proceeding to the argument in the next chapter, it may be well to notice the discussion of the question of Personal Identity, which, as the author tells us, he had originally intended for insertion in this part of his work, but afterwards placed in an appendix. It was a question which delighted the metaphysicians of the day, but which Butler's practical mind

evidently regarded as rather a question of words, to which common sense supplied the only really satisfactory answer. All attempts to define this identity 'would but perplex it,' in his opinion: while the idea of it is not difficult at all. Shaftesbury has observed how little the question, 'What are we ourselves?' is answered by the formula of Descartes, 'I think, therefore I am.' If the '*I*' be well established in the first part of the proposition, no doubt, as he says with his usual acuteness, it will hold good in the latter.

'But the question is, "What constitutes the WE or I?" And "Whether the I of this instant be the same with that of any instant preceding or to come?" For we have nothing but memory to warrant us; and memory may be false. We may believe we have thought or reflected thus and thus; but we may be mistaken. We may be conscious of that as truth, which perhaps was no more than a dream. . . . This is what metaphysicians mean when they say that identity can be proved, only by consciousness: but that consciousness withal may be as well false as real in respect of what is past. So that the same successional WE or I must remain still, on this account, undecided.'—Characteristics, vol. iii. p. 193 (ed. 1732).

Shaftesbury goes on to say that he is content to 'take his being upon trust.' And it is not difficult to gather from Butler's pages that he was content practically to do the same. But he felt that the subject he was upon compelled him to notice speculations which were the literary passion of the day, little as he himself valued such inquiries.

He sees that consciousness cannot constitute personal identity, though it may make it clear practically to ourselves. No doubt, if we compare our consciousness now

and at some past moment, it gives us the idea that we are one and the same person; but it presupposes such identity, and is not necessary to it at all. Personality must be prior to consciousness, as truth is prior to the knowledge of truth. He means that we are really the same persons now that we were twenty years ago,—whether we remember it or not. Nor is our identity the mere sameness of life and organisation, as in the case of the tree, which we say is 'the same' tree as it was fifty years ago; it is not mere continuity of existence, as the materialist would hold. He is more content with the definition given by Locke—that personal identity is 'the sameness of a rational being.' But the difficulty which Locke and others saw was this: that the consciousness of our existence at any two successive periods (say youth and old age) is 'not the same consciousness, but different successive consciousnesses.' And this refinement of doubt was carried out by others (notably by Collins in his reply to Clarke) to such length that it came practically to asserting, as Butler puts it, that 'consciousness, being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor, consequently, can the personality constituted by it.'[1]

Butler pursues this to its remoter but necessary conclusion, which he thinks is the best confutation of it.

'And from hence it must follow that it is a fallacy upon ourselves to charge our present selves with anything we did, or to imagine our present selves interested in anything which

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1 Reid has remarked, in stronger terms than Butler, that Locke strangely confounds the evidence of personal identity with the identity itself.

befell us yesterday, or that our present self will be interested in what will befall us to-morrow; since our present self is not, in reality, the same with the self of yesterday, but another like self or person coming in its room, and mistaken for it; to which another self will succeed to-morrow. This, I say, must follow; for if the self or person of to-day and that of to-morrow are not the same, but only like persons, the person of to-day is really no more interested in what will befall the person of to-morrow, than in what will befall any other person.'

Such an explanation of personal identity would, as he remarks at the outset of this dissertation, make the question of a future life of no practical importance at all to us in the present. But it plainly contradicts our inherent convictions, our memory, and our consciousness. We should never dream of applying it to the present life—of altering our conduct as to our health or worldly affairs, 'from a suspicion that though we should live to-morrow, we shall not be the same persons we are to-day.' Yet, if it were reasonable to act on such a notion with regard to the future life, it would be equally reasonable in the case of the present.

But may not our memory and consciousness deceive us? May not memory play us false, as Shaftesbury puts it? This, says Butler, is really a question as to the truth of all perception by memory, and he who doubts this may equally doubt perception by deduction and reasoning. We cannot *prove* the truth of either, because we could only prove it by the use of the very faculties whose accuracy we suspect.

(Chap. II.) What makes the question of a future life really important to us is the supposition of our happiness or misery in that life depending on our behaviour in this.

Now, we are plainly living in this world under a law of reward and punishment; happiness or misery follows upon a certain course of action; life itself depends upon care, success upon exertion. If we ask why the Author of nature does not make all his creatures happy without the instrumentality of their own actions, Butler contends, in a forcible passage, that this may perhaps be impossible 'in the nature of things;' or contrary to the perfection of divine goodness, 'with which,' he caustically observes, 'if I mistake not, we make very free in our speculations.' Or, such instrumentality may be an essential part of a scheme which, as he presently shows, is imperfectly comprehended. However, the fact is matter of experience, that we are forewarned —or enabled to foresee — that enjoyment or suffering will follow upon a certain course of action. And if it be objected that this is only the general course of nature, the reply is that this means the mode of government of the Author of nature (for such an Author we are supposing throughout), who does not govern the less really because his government is uniform. Even if nature were a machine working according to fixed laws (as Leibnitz affirmed), Butler would recognise the governing mind which contrived the machine, and would not contend, as Clarke did, that such a notion tended to exclude the providence and government of God. Nay, he holds that if the civil magistrates 'could make their laws execute themselves,' we should only be under their personal government in a higher and more perfect manner. Thus the whole course of nature shows us to be now under a government by means of rewards and punishments; and therefore, by analogy, there is at least

nothing incredible in our being rewarded or punished for our actions hereafter.

But it is divine punishment in the future that men are most unwilling to allow. Now the punishments which follow upon certain acts in the natural course of things are remarkably analogous to what religion teaches us as to the future. 1. They follow actions which promise, and even give, present pleasure and advantage. 2. They seem often disproportionately great compared with such pleasure or advantage. 3. They are often long delayed, —but this gives no presumption of impunity,—and when they come, often come suddenly. 4. They are not foreseen as a certainty, and seldom distinctly expected. 5. When incurred, the step which incurred them is irretrievable, and when certain bounds have been transgressed, 'there remains no place for repentance in the natural course of things.' And all this, though it does not uniformly follow, or always proportionately to the character of the act, yet is not accidental, but, as experience shows us, the working of a general law; so that it leaves 'no pretence of reason for people to think themselves secure' that there is no analogous state of things hereafter.

In his 'Dissertation upon Virtue,' originally intended to form part of this chapter upon the moral government of the world, Butler shows that such government implies man's having a moral nature and moral faculties capable of distinguishing right from wrong. Here, as in his sermons on human nature, he is in distinct opposition to that narrower school of Utilitarianism of which Hobbes may be taken as the founder, according to which there exists no innate sense at all of right and

wrong, and such ideas are only gathered by experience of what is on the whole conducive to our own interest. Butler argues, on the other hand, that this faculty of moral perception is that which in the main makes our humanity — that in which we differ from the brutes, in common with whom we have instincts and propensions. He calls this faculty a 'moral approving and disapproving faculty' (terms which, as he explains, he borrows from the opening chapter of Epictetus), by which, wholly irrespective of advantage or disadvantage to society, we have a sense of merit or demerit attached to certain actions (including always the intention of the agent), of which we are inwardly conscious from our own experience, and which we recognise in others — 'whether we call it conscience, moral sense, moral reason, or divine reason.' Moral government, then, consists in awarding happiness and misery according to the degree in which men follow or depart from the rule suggested by this innate moral sense; this, and not its utility in even its widest application, Butler asserts to be the test of the quality of an action. Virtue is not to be resolved entirely into benevolence, as the school of Hutcheson would assert; nor is its rule the 'attaining the greatest happiness of the greatest number.' He would hold, with Paley, that virtue does in its final results always conduce to the true happiness both of the individual and of society; but that we do not judge of actions, and ought not to regulate our own, by any measure of direct utility. We condemn falsehood, violence, and injustice, even though we should have reason to believe that the immediate result would be to increase the amount of human hap-

piness: we are so made that we can judge of the right and the wrong, while we are wholly incompetent to judge of remote consequences.

It may be admitted that, as Chalmers and others have thought, Butler's arguments in his first chapter are far from conclusive as to the existence of a future state, however destructive they may be of popular objections to the doctrine. Probably it would be impossible, putting revelation aside, to adduce any argument more weighty than the longing for immortality implanted in man's heart, and the belief in it which, in a more or less intelligent form, is so nearly universal. But in this chapter on rewards and punishments, where he is dealing with what is more within the compass of the human faculties, his reasoning amounts almost to moral demonstration; and the moderation of his statement of the case only strengthens the appeal, somewhat more impassioned than his usual tone, which he makes in the concluding paragraph.

'It is fit things be stated and considered as they really are. And there is, in the present age, a certain fearlessness with regard to what may be hereafter under the government of God, which nothing but an universally acknowledged demonstration on the side of atheism can justify; and which makes it quite necessary that men be reminded, and if possible made to feel, that there is no sort of ground for being thus presumptuous, even upon the most sceptical principles. For may it not be said of any person, upon his being born into the world, he may behave so as to be of no service to it, but by being made an example of the woful effects of vice and folly? that he may (as any one may, if he will) incur an infamous execution from the hands of civil justice; or in some other course of extravagance shorten his days; or bring

upon himself infamy and diseases worse than death? so that it had been better for him, even with regard to the present world, that he had never been born. And is there any pretence of reason for people to think themselves secure, and talk as if they had certain proof that, let them act as licentiously as they will, there can be nothing analogous to this, with regard to a future and more general interest, under the providence and government of the same God?'

(Chap. III.) As a government by rewards and punishments does not of necessity imply a moral government —*i.e.*, the reward of virtue and the punishment of vice, as such; and as this last is the kind of government which religion ascribes to God, we have now to examine how far—over and above the moral nature which He has given us, and the notion of Him as a righteous governor which He has implanted in that nature—we can discover the existence of the principles of such a government even in the present (confessedly imperfect and confused) state of things. Butler will not insist much upon the argument that virtue produces happiness,—he admits candidly that in our present life there are exceptions to this, however true it may be upon the whole. But he maintains that as it has been shown that we are rewarded and punished here according to settled rules of *some* kind, it corresponds with our 'sense of things' that this rule should be what we call 'distributive justice;' that the existence of such a rule is witnessed by the fact that prudence and imprudence—'which are of the nature of virtue and vice'—are rewarded and punished here; that vice is, in some degree, punished by society, either by actual penalty or by the fear of it; and though virtuous actions may sometimes be punished (as in

the case of persecution), or vice rewarded, yet they are not punished or rewarded as such; while the world does, on the whole, show its approbation of the one and its disapprobation of the other. We find that we are so made that well-doing, in itself, satisfies us—at least in some instances; ill-doing, never. 'There is nothing in the human mind contradictory, as the logicians speak, to virtue.' If we see, as we do, vice prosperous and virtue suffering, plainly it is not the intent of nature that it should be so. In all cases where circumstances thwart and hinder this intent, such hindrance is more or less abnormal and accidental, while the intent is uniform and consistent. And were it not for such accidental disturbances, the general law that virtue is rewarded here, and vice punished, would come out more distinctly. Such hindrances and disturbances may be removed in a future and more perfect state, and the virtue that is cramped and thwarted here may have full scope hereafter. The present tendencies in its favour are, as Butler remarks in his concluding summary, 'to be considered as intimations—as implicit promises and threatenings—from the Author of nature,' of a much more perfect system of rewards and punishments in the future.

The author proceeds, in support of his position, to draw a picture of a kingdom or society where virtue should be permanently established in its full perfection. He admits that it is an impossible Utopia.

'In such a state there would be no such thing as faction; but men of the greatest capacity would, of course, all along have the chief direction of affairs willingly yielded to them, and they would share it among themselves without envy.

Each of these would have the part assigned him to which his genius was peculiarly adapted; and others, who had not any distinguished genius, would be safe, and think themselves very happy, by being under the protection and guidance of those who had. Public determinations would really be the result of the united wisdom of the community; and they would faithfully be executed by the united strength of it. Some would in a higher way contribute, but all would in some way contribute, to the public prosperity; and in it each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. And as injustice, whether by fraud or force, would be unknown among themselves, so they would be sufficiently secured from it in their neighbours. For cunning and false self-interest, confederacies in injustice — ever slight, and accompanied with faction and intestine treachery—these on one hand would be found mere childish folly and weakness, when set in opposition against wisdom, public spirit, union inviolable, and fidelity on the other,—allowing both a sufficient length of years to try their force. Add the general influence which such a kingdom would have over the face of the earth, by way of example particularly, and the reverence which would be paid it. It would plainly be superior to all others, and the world must gradually come under its empire; not by means of lawless violence, but partly by what must be allowed to be just conquest, and partly by other kingdoms submitting themselves voluntarily to it, throughout a course of ages, and claiming its protection, one after another, in successive exigencies.[1] The head of it would be an universal monarch, in another sense than any mortal has yet been.'

We have on the whole, then, a real presumption that the moral scheme of government established by nature shall be carried out in its full perfection hereafter.

[1] Mr Leslie Stephen remarks that this hypothesis, which contains a position substantially true, 'that races will flourish as they adapt themselves to the laws of nature,' is in harmony with the doctrine of the 'survival of the fittest.'—History of English Thought, vol. i. p. 292.

(Chap. IV.) The moral government of God, as taught by religion, implies that we are here in a state of trial as regards our future state. Can we, then, find that we are in any analogous state of trial as regards the present?

Our happiness here depends in great degree on our own acts, and we are constantly under temptations to neglect our temporal interests. And the causes of this natural probation are strictly analogous to the causes of our religious probation, arising either from our own nature or from the circumstances in which we are placed. Our passions are often as strongly opposed to that 'reasonable self-love' which tends to our true worldly interest, as they are to the principles of virtue and religion: while our difficulties and dangers are, in both cases, increased by bad education, evil example, and the prevalence of false views.

Butler finds in this state of things the confirmation of a truth which underlies his theory of human nature throughout, though he is careful in this part of his treatise not to press it,—that we are here 'in a state of degradation;' 'in a condition that *does not seem*, by any means, the most advantageous we could imagine or desire, either in our natural or moral capacity, for securing either our present or future interest.' This is, as he shows hereafter,[1] a fact, not only revealed in Scripture, but patent to any thoughtful observation, and admitted by heathen moralists,—'how difficult soever to account for.' To complain of it would be, he thinks, as unreasonable as useless, since neither nature nor religion put upon us more than we can do, and the probation is

[1] Part II., chap. v.

in neither case beyond our strength. It involves the hazard of failure, no doubt, in the one case as in the other; and 'why anything of hazard and danger should be put upon such frail creatures as we are, may well be thought a difficulty in speculation, and cannot but be so until we know the whole or however much more of the case.' But if thought, and care, and self-denial under temptation, are needful to secure our lower interests here, this at least removes all presumption against their being needful to secure our higher interests hereafter. Under both systems, as he strikingly puts it, as our interest 'is not forced upon us, so neither is it offered to our acceptance, but to our acquisition;' and we may miss it in the future, as men notoriously do miss it in the present.

(Chap. V.) The inquiry why we are placed in a state of probation at all is, in fact, the inquiry into the origin and existence of evil,—the question that has never yet been answered. There were speculations enough about it in Butler's day. Leibnitz had taught, with some of the best of the old Greek philosophers, that evil was in itself only a form of good, or essential to the existence of good. Archbishop King and other English writers had argued that evil was not inconsistent with the character of the Deity, and was the necessary result of the action of free-will. Butler makes no attempt to solve the real difficulty: he doubts whether we should understand the solution if we could discover it, and whether it would help us if we did. He contents himself with maintaining that at least wickedness is voluntary, as the term itself would imply; and so passes on to the more practical inquiry, 'What is our business here,'—in this world where, as a fact, evil does exist?

He argues that here we are in a state of education as well as probation. As childhood and youth are an education for maturity,—'an important opportunity which nature puts into our hands, and which, when lost, is not to be recovered'—and as the capacities of the child develop into those of the man,—one state of this temporal life preparing us for another,—so there is a preparation going on here for a higher state of existence; there are capacities to be developed, a character to be formed, which is to qualify us for a future happiness. For happiness, in order to be happiness at all, must be suited to our capacities: and the constitution of human nature we find to be such that its capacities can be largely developed; we are 'capable of becoming qualified for states of life for which we were once wholly disqualified,'—as in the case of the child growing into a man. We are capable of acquiring new facilities of action, and of settled alterations in our temper and character. This is the power of habit, the paramount importance of which as a factor in moral character Butler recognises as distinctly as Aristotle. He shows how habits arise from repeated action; and notes acutely how passive impressions grow weakened by repetition, while action grows easier and more pleasurable. This part of the chapter is indeed mainly founded upon Aristotle's ethical theory, and Butler's exposition of the growth and power of habit has been considered by many (Archdeacon Hare among the number) as the most valuable portion of the treatise.

He has a remark upon the superiority of action over speculation, which shows how keenly sensible he was of the danger to the active minds of his own day of

discussing systems of religion and morals instead of applying them in practice.

'Going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it,—this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible —*i.e.*, form a habit of insensibility—to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker.'

Some of the author's remarks upon the possible ends of such a state of educational discipline as he shows mankind to be placed under are original and striking, and show an inclination to bolder speculation than is his wont. He holds it probable that the state of existence hereafter will be 'a community,' in which there will be 'scope for the exercise of veracity, justice, and charity,' and which may therefore presumably require a frame of mind 'formed by the daily practice of those virtues here;' that 'particular affections'—by which he seems to mean the natural passions—will still remain to us in that state; that consequently there may be still, in a certain sense, temptation for such passions or affections, and that the principle of virtue, strengthened by habit, may still be necessary for their regulation, and our real safeguard against falling. So the practical discipline of life—experience of evil, pain, and sorrow, of the frailty of our nature, of the danger of ungoverned passions, of possible misery—may have been needful for us: 'Who knows whether the security of creatures in the highest and most settled state of perfection may not arise from their having had such

a sense of things as this formed and fixed within them in some state of probation?'

Butler seems here to anticipate and to suggest a possible answer to an objection raised by Mackintosh against the completeness of the argument from analogy as to a future state: if happiness and misery now depend on our conduct here, may they not, in the future state, depend on our conduct there? He would seem prepared to reply that there probably *will* be the same real connection between conduct and happiness; and that therefore the habit of virtue must be confirmed during our probation here.

It may be objected—and, as he admits, with truth—that to most men this present state is, in effect, rather a discipline of vice than of virtue. He argues, with an unflinching sternness of view which is characteristic of him, that 'the viciousness of the world is the great temptation which renders it a state of virtuous discipline to all good men;' and that if these be few out of many, this is but analogous to the waste which we observe continually going on in nature, in the case of the seed of vegetables, and the young of certain animals.

'Yet no one, who does not deny all final causes, will deny that those seeds and bodies, which do attain to that point of maturity and perfection, answer the end for which they were really designed by nature; and therefore that nature designed them for such perfection. And I cannot forbear adding, though it is not to the present purpose, that the *appearance* of such an amazing *waste* in nature, with respect to these seeds and bodies, by foreign causes, is to us as unaccountable as what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves—*i.e.*, by vice.'

Aristotle would tell us that it is the stubbornness of

the material which causes this waste,—these anomalies and 'superfluities.' Creation he looks upon as the ceaseless progress of matter into form, in which there are, as it were, tentative failures: the brute is the failure of man. It is not difficult to see in this the germ of the modern doctrine of Evolution. Berkeley has called this waste 'a splendid profusion'—the working of a power whose resources are unlimited, and which has no need of thrift.[1] Modern philosophy, on the other hand, as represented by Mill and Spencer, sees in this waste of nature—or, as they would rather term it, the 'struggle for existence'—an argument against the credibility of an Author of nature, inasmuch as it would be an intimation of his deficiency either in power or in goodness.

Butler notices other objections, of which the most obvious and telling seems to be this—that all the trouble and danger of such discipline might have been spared us, had we been made at once the characters that we were to be. But this, again, would be contrary to the analogy of nature's law, which is not to save us trouble and danger, but to make us able to overcome it—not to bestow at once, but to enable us to acquire and perfect the qualifications needed, and to make us become what we are to be by effort passing into habit.

The thought with which Butler concludes this chapter may possibly be considered fanciful, but is so striking and suggestive as to deserve quotation.

'There is a third thing which may seem implied in the present world's being a state of probation,—that it is a theatre of action for the manifestation of persons' characters with respect to a future one; not, to be sure, to an all-knowing Being,

[1] Principles of Human Knowledge, sect. 152.

but to this creation or part of it. This may, perhaps, be only a consequence of our being in a state of probation in the other senses. However, it is not impossible that men's showing and making manifest what is in their heart, what their real character is, may have respect to a future life in ways and manners which we are not acquainted with; particularly it may be a means (for the Author of nature does not appear to do anything without means) of their being disposed of suitably to their characters, and of its being known to the creation, by way of example, that they are thus disposed of.'

He returns again to this idea in the latter part of the treatise, when in speaking of those characters for whom the lower temptations of life seem to be no real trial at all,—to whom the practice of religion seems easy, and for whom intellectual doubt may be assigned as a probation—he says, 'It may be requisite, for reasons unknown to us, that they should give some further manifestation what is their moral character to the creation of God than such a practice of it would be.'[1]

(Chap. VI.) The author now proceeds to meet the question whether the fatalist, who must admit that his doctrine of Necessity is reconcilable with the scheme of nature as we know it, is not also bound to admit that it may be reconcilable with the system of religion such as it is presented to us, or with the existence of a moral Governor of the world. Fatalism, or Necessity,[2] does not exclude the notion of an intelligent agent in creation, or an intelligent Governor of nature, any more

[1] Part II., chap. vi.

[2] The Necessitarians, however, deny that Necessity, as they understand it, is Fatalism. Their assertion is this: that, given the motives present to a man's mind, and given also his character and disposition, his behaviour under certain circumstances can be as certainly predicted as any physical result. (See Mill's Logic, vol. ii. p. 415.)

than it excludes (for instance) the notion of an architect in the case of the existence of a house. All that the fatalist can possibly assert is, that the house was built by the architect under necessity, and not as a free agent, and so that the constitution of nature is the work of an intelligent agent acting under the law of necessity. When the fatalist speaks of necessity as the cause of things, he must mean ('though I am very sensible,' says Butler, 'he would not choose to mean it') an agent acting necessarily. 'Necessity as much requires and supposes a necessary agent, as freedom requires and supposes a free agent, to be the former of the world.'

But if this doctrine of necessity does not destroy the proof of an intelligent Author of nature and natural Governor of the world, does it, in the way of analogy, destroy 'all reasonable ground of belief that we are in a state of religion'—*i.e.*, under a moral government? No; for practically, even supposing fatalism to be true, we act as if it were false. The child brought up in the principles of fatalism would find that he was nevertheless blamed and punished for doing what he was forbidden, and treated by the world, as he grew up, just as though he were a free agent and accountable for his actions. Or if a man decline to use ordinary care for his own preservation, in the belief that he is absolutely fated to live a certain number of years, he will find that in application his doctrine becomes practically false. 'Therefore, though it were admitted that this doctrine of necessity were speculatively true, yet with regard to practice it is as if it were false.' Under this present natural government of the world we are dealt with as if we

were free: whatever be the truth of this doctrine of necessity, the application of it in practice is found by experience to mislead us terribly as to our present interests,—is there not a probability it may so mislead us as to our future interests too?

Besides, we are conscious of a will and a character in ourselves; and if this be reconcilable with the doctrine of necessity in our own case, it must be so in the case of the Author of nature: indeed, his being the Designer and Governor of the world implies his possessing such will and character; and necessity no more excludes benevolence, veracity, and justice in him (upon which our idea of his character is founded) than any other qualities, since that doctrine, if it be true, plainly does not exclude these qualities in the case of men. If the fatalist denies the existence of any moral character, and denounces any punishment as unjust, because it is inflicted for doing that which the sufferer could not help doing, Butler shows the confusion of thought which is practically involved.

'As if the necessity which is supposed to destroy the injustice of murder, for instance, would not also destroy the injustice of punishing it. However, as little to the purpose as this objection is in itself, it is very much to the purpose to observe from it how the notions of justice and injustice remain, even whilst we endeavour to suppose them removed; how they force themselves upon the mind, even whilst we are making suppositions destructive of them; for there is not perhaps a man in the world but would be ready to make this objection at first thought.'

The author, though he holds the real existence of free-will to be matter of experience (and probably felt,

with Clarke, that this was the most cogent of all arguments), admits that its discussion opens the way to 'the most abstruse of all speculations.' But the doctrine of necessity he rightly holds to be 'the very basis on which infidelity grounds itself,' removing, as he says afterwards, all restraints upon vice, and contradicting alike the course of nature and our own experience, and so 'overturning everything;' and therefore he is at some pains to show that it is of no real force, even if true, in destroying the obligations of religion.

We find, as a matter of fact, independent of all speculation, that this world is governed under a system of rewards and punishments, and that we have within us a moral faculty by which we distinguish actions as virtuous or vicious, and praise and blame them accordingly; that this implies a peculiar rule of action, carrying with it an authority of which we are conscious, 'from which we cannot depart without being self-condemned.' And the sense of security we feel in following this rule, and of danger in departing from it, shows it to be nothing less than a law of God, carrying with it an implicit promise of reward and threat of punishment. This is confirmed by what has been shown before of the natural tendencies of virtue and vice, and by the punishment of vicious acts as such, and as being mischievous to society. While thus the internal evidence, resting on experience, cannot be disproved by any preconceived notion of necessity, the external evidences of natural religion are plainly not affected by it at all.

But after all, the fatalist may be supposed to reply that he is not obliged to answer mere probable arguments in support of an opinion which he believes can

clearly be shown to be false: that government by rewards and punishments goes on the supposition that we are free, whereas we are really necessary agents: and it is incredible that the Author of nature should govern us on a supposition which he knows to be false.

'The answer to all this is full, and not to be evaded,—that the whole constitution and course of things, the whole analogy of Providence, shows beyond possibility of doubt that the conclusion from this reasoning is false, wherever the fallacy lies. The doctrine of freedom indeed clearly shows where,—in supposing ourselves necessary, when in truth we are free, agents. But upon the supposition of necessity, the fallacy lies in taking for granted that it is incredible necessary agents should be rewarded and punished. But that, somehow or other, the conclusion now mentioned is false, is most certain. For it is fact that God does govern even brute creatures by the method of rewards and punishments, in the natural course of things. And men are rewarded and punished for their actions,—punished for actions mischievous to society as being so, punished for vicious actions as such,—by the natural instrumentality of each other, under the present conduct of Providence.'

His conclusion is that necessity—supposing it to be true and reconcilable with 'the constitution of things'—in no way interferes with the proof that the Author of nature will in his eternal government bestow happiness and misery on his creatures according to their behaviour; that the analogy of nature shows us that the doctrine of necessity, considered as influencing practice, is false; and that the hypothesis of its truth, as it does not destroy the proof of natural religion, so it does not affect the truth of revealed.

(Chap. VII.) The fact of a moral government of the

world has been shown to be credible from the analogy of its natural government, and also that this credibility is not destroyed by the hypothesis of necessity. But objections may be taken against the wisdom and goodness of this government, which can be answered from analogy only remotely, thus: by showing that, as the natural government of the world is a complex scheme, and as such imperfectly comprehended, analogy would lead us to expect the same in the moral government which we are set to consider. Butler is here only developing the argument which he had stated briefly in his sermon 'On the Ignorance of Man,' which should be read in connection with this chapter of his 'Analogy.' He there says that 'the scheme of Providence is too vast and of too large extent for our capacities,' and that 'we are much less competent judges of the very small part which comes under our notice in this world than we are apt to imagine;' so that 'our ignorance is the proper answer to many things which are called objections against religion.' His treatment here of this important truth is a good specimen of his more lucid style.

'It is most obvious, analogy renders it highly credible, that, upon supposition of a moral government, it must be a scheme: for the world, and the whole natural government of it, appears to be so—to be a scheme, system, or constitution, whose parts correspond to each other, and to a whole; as really as any work of art, or as any particular model of a civil constitution and government. In this great scheme of the natural world, individuals have various peculiar relations to other individuals of their own species. And whole species are, we find, variously related to other species upon this earth. Nor do we know how much further these kinds of relations may extend. And as there is not any action or

natural event, which we are acquainted with, so single and unconnected as not to have a respect to some other actions and events; so possibly each of them, when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote, natural relation to other actions and events, much beyond the compass of this present world. There seems indeed nothing from whence we can so much as make a conjecture, whether all creatures, actions, and events, throughout the whole of nature, have relations to each other. But, as it is obvious that all events have future unknown consequences; so if we trace any, as far as we can go, into what is connected with it, we shall find that if such event were not connected with somewhat further in nature unknown to us, somewhat both past and present, such event could not possibly have been at all. Nor can we give the whole account of any one thing whatever,—of all its causes, ends, and necessary adjuncts; those adjuncts, I mean, without which it could not have been. By this most astonishing connection, these reciprocal correspondences and mutual relations, everything which we see in the course of nature is actually brought about. And things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance: so that any one thing whatever may, for aught we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other.'

The connection between the natural and moral government of the world is so close that they appear really to make up only one scheme: it seems probable that the former 'is only formed and carried on in subserviency to the latter, as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organised bodies for minds;' so that every act of Divine justice and goodness may be supposed to look far beyond itself, with reference to a general moral plan. In which case it is evident that we are not competent judges of a scheme, a very small part of which comes within our

present view, and cannot reasonably insist upon objections taken against any such part by itself.

He adduces some particular analogies between what we know to be the case in the natural government of the world, and what we may suppose to be the case in the moral. Undesirable means will often, in the natural world, conduce to ends which are desirable in much larger degree: so in the moral world the misery we suffer from each other, and our liability to vice, may tend ultimately to the furtherance of virtue, and thus to a larger balance of happiness. God's natural government is carried on under general laws, which do not prevent great exceptional irregularities: and so in his moral government the general laws may be wise and good, and the exceptions to which we take objection unavoidable, though we cannot see the reason why.

It may be objected to the whole of this argument that we must judge of religion, as of other things, by what we do know, and not by what we do not know; and that the plea of ignorance may be used to invalidate the proof as much as the objection. Butler's reply is perhaps more ingenious than convincing; '*total* ignorance,' he admits, would preclude equally all proof and all objections: 'partial ignorance does not.' We may know the character of an agent, and therefore the ends he will consequently pursue, yet may be very ignorant as to the due means he will take. So we may know the moral character of God, and the final purpose of his government, and yet be ignorant as to the best mode of accomplishing it.

But suppose the objection valid, our moral obligations would still remain,—both because they arise from

that law within us which we cannot violate without condemning ourselves, and because there is at least a sufficient *probability* of those consequences of our conduct, which religion teaches, to engage us in common prudence to act upon it. We are referred once more to the principle which is the corner-stone of the whole treatise—that 'probability is to us the very guide of life.' But perhaps the strongest defence of the present argument is contained in the last paragraph of the chapter, in which we are reminded that though it may be said in general terms to turn upon our 'ignorance,' it is really our incompetency to judge as to certain particulars which, as we have learnt from analogy, might lead us to false conclusions; and that to take this into account is not really ignorance, but knowledge: it is 'to judge by experience and by what we *do* know.'

The author recapitulates the outlines of the argument contained in the previous chapters in a few pages of 'Conclusion' to this first part of the 'Analogy.' The demand which he makes upon his readers is studiously moderate. He does not ask them to admit that he has conclusively proved his case, but that he has adduced such evidence as merits their 'earnest consideration;' that it is 'absurd for men to think themselves secure in a vicious life, or even in that immoral thoughtlessness which far the greatest part of them are fallen into:' and that 'a righteous administration established in nature,' and a future judgment in accordance with it, are founded on evidence fully sufficient, even though, like all such evidence, 'it should be mixed with some doubt.'

CHAPTER VII.

ANALOGY OF REVEALED RELIGION TO THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

In the first part of the treatise which we have just been considering, Revealed Religion, or in other words, the scheme of Christianity, has been studiously excluded, so far as possible, from the argument. For the purpose of the author was there confined to showing how natural religion—involving a future life, a moral government by rewards and punishments, and a present state of probation—was in the very highest degree probable, as analogous to the course and constitution of the natural world as we see it. In this second part he proceeds to show that the Christian revelation is also (to say the least) highly credible on the same grounds. And here he applies himself in the first place to answer the argument of Tindal in the work already named—'Christianity as old as the Creation.'[1] 'Some persons, upon pretence of the sufficiency of the light of nature, avowedly reject all revelation as in its very notion incredible, and what must be fictitious.' Such are the opening words of this portion of his argument. Tindal had scarcely said so

[1] See p. 98.

much as this: but perhaps Butler was justified in assuming it as the real conclusion to which Tindal's view necessarily tended. The position which the latter had taken is this: that natural religion, if proceeding, as we assume, from a perfect legislator, must itself be absolutely perfect; revelation, therefore, can add nothing to it that carries obligation, and therefore is not needed. Whatever in Scripture makes for the honour of God, whatever is in accordance with reason and agreeable to natural religion, he would be content to accept in what was called revelation; but whatever represents the Deity as doing what our reason does not approve as worthy of the Divine character, no evidence could make credible to him; and in Scripture he found the Deity sometimes so represented. Such was the line of objection also taken by Shaftesbury and Bolingbroke. Butler's argument in reply to such objections comes to something like this: 'You assert the religion of nature to be absolutely perfect and according to reason, whereas the religion of revelation is found to be inconsistent and imperfect: I am prepared to show that the same apparent inconsistencies and imperfections exist in both.' Perhaps Butler, as well as Tindal, was inclined to draw too broad a distinction between the terms 'natural' and 'revealed.' Nothing can be said to be revealed which has not antecedently a real and therefore a natural existence. The knowledge of God which we call natural religion is as much a revelation to the mind of man as the doctrines of Christianity. Indeed Butler himself says, further on, that natural religion 'was not first reasoned out,' but came into the world by revelation:[1] just as he argues,

[1] Part II. chap. ii.

in the same chapter, that the power exerted in creation was as different from the present course of nature (and therefore open to the same objections on that ground) as the Christian miracles themselves.

He admits that had the light of nature been of itself sufficient no further revelation would have been needed, and therefore none would have been given. But he denies the existence of this light of nature, even amongst the wisest and best of the heathen. He proceeds in this chapter to address himself more particularly to those who do not go so far as Tindal in assertion, but who look upon revelation (even on the supposition of its truth) as of comparatively small importance. 'The only design of it, say they, must be to establish a belief of the moral system of nature, and to enforce the practice of natural piety and virtue;' and whether such results be secured on the evidence and motives of nature or revelation is, in their view, of little consequence.

The inquiry into the importance of Christianity should therefore, he considers, precede any inquiry as to its credibility.

Now if God has given a revelation containing certain commands, it cannot be matter of indifference whether we obey these commands or not.

Christianity is important, first, as a republication of natural religion, in its genuine simplicity, not overlaid with superstitions; with new and authoritative proofs, such as prophecy and miracles; with new light thrown upon important truths, such as immortality and 'the efficacy of repentance;' with positive institutions, such as a visible Church and forms of public worship, to remind men of the reality of religion, a perpetual embodi-

ment and memorial of its truths. And if it be objected that in spite of this Christianity has been perverted and corrupted, and has done but little good (which last he denies), Butler's reply is consistent with the principle of the argument he has laid down; the law of nature (admitted to be from God) has also been too often perverted and made ineffectual. Analogy holds good in this case also; and the argument from abuse is in no case any argument at all.

'For one cannot proceed one step in reasoning upon natural religion, any more than upon Christianity, without laying it down as a first principle, that the dispensations of Providence are not to be judged of by their perversions, but by their genuine tendencies; not by what they do actually seem to effect, but by what they would effect if mankind did their part—that part which is justly put and left upon us.'

But further, in the second place, Christianity reveals a dispensation of things not discoverable by reason, involving consequently new precepts and new duties—the knowledge of the Son as the mediator, and the Holy Spirit as guide and sanctifier, and the duties which spring from our relations to each. It is not only a republication of natural religion; it makes known to us additional truths, adapted to the state in which natural religion would leave us,—'the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented by Scripture to be in a state of ruin.'

'If this account of the Christian religion be just, those persons who can speak lightly of it, as of little consequence provided natural religion be kept to, plainly forget that Christianity, even what is peculiarly so called as distinguished from natural religion, has yet somewhat very important, even of

a moral nature. For the office of our Lord being made known, and the relation He stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to Him is plainly moral, as much as charity to mankind is; since this obligation arises, before external command, immediately out of that His office and relation itself. Those persons appear to forget that revelation is to be considered as informing us of somewhat new in the state of mankind and in the government of the world; as acquainting us with some relations we stand in which could not otherwise have been known. And these relations being real, though before revelation we could be under no obligations from them, yet upon their being revealed, there is no reason to think but that neglect of behaving suitably to them will be attended with the same kind of consequences under God's government, as neglecting to behave suitably to any other revelations made known to us by reason. And ignorance, whether unavoidable or voluntary, so far as we can possibly see, will just as much, and just as little, excuse in one case as in the other,—the ignorance being supposed equally unavoidable, or equally voluntary, in both cases.'

Tindal had strongly asserted, in harmony with his theory of the all-sufficiency of the light of nature, that God could not under any circumstances enjoin upon mankind positive precepts, but only moral. He used the term 'positive' in a sense somewhat unfair, as though it were equivalent to *arbitrary—i.e.*, precepts for which there is no reason at all. Butler, after showing that the whole spirit of Christianity tends to the obeying the moral rather than the positive precept, whenever they seem to interfere, adds one of those practical cautions which, almost more than anything else, stamp the character of the author's mind upon his book.

'But, as it is one of the peculiar weaknesses of human nature, when upon a comparison of two things one is found

to be of greater importance than the other, to consider this other as of scarce any importance at all; it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves how great presumption it is to make light of any institutions of Divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from Him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them,—an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.'

He concludes this chapter with another pregnant sentence,—a warning alike against reasoning from ignorance, and the neglect to use our reasoning at all. For Butler is as ready to admit a legitimate appeal to reason as any rationalist or free-thinker of his day.

'If in revelation there be found any passages, the seeming meaning of which is contrary to natural religion, we may most certainly conclude such seeming meaning not to be the real one. But it is not any degree of a presumption against an interpretation of Scripture, that such interpretation contains a doctrine which the light of nature cannot discover; or a precept which the law of nature does not oblige to.'

(Chap. II.) Having shown that Christianity is at the least important enough to deserve a careful consideration, the author proceeds to meet the presumptive objections, which seem to him so commonly entertained, against such a revelation on account of its miraculous nature. Such presumption must rest, he considers, either on the ground of its being not discoverable by reason or experience, or on that of its being unlike the whole course of nature. As to the first, the analogy of what the wisest of us know—or rather, do not know—of the natural and moral system of the universe, does not fairly raise any such presumption at

all. 'That things should lie beyond the natural reach of our faculties' is no presumption against their reality, for we daily meet with things in the constitution of nature which are confessedly of this kind. Nor is there any just presumption against the teaching of Scripture from its being unlike the known course of nature. To expect that the *whole* course of the Divine government, and everything in it, should be like something we already know, is to make an unfair demand upon analogy; even in the natural and moral government of the world we see many things unlike each other—therefore 'we ought not to wonder at such unlikeness between things visible and invisible.' But that the scheme of Christianity is 'by no means entirely unlike the scheme of nature' he will hereafter show.

He denies that there can be any presumption from analogy against a miraculous revelation at the beginning of the world; for a miracle means something different from the known course of nature, and in the beginning there was no established course at all. Besides, the power exerted at creation was different from the present course of nature; and whether that power was further exerted so as to give a revelation, is a question not of kind but of degree. And history and tradition teach that religion was not first reasoned out, but that it came by revelation. Still, it may be objected that at least there is a presumption against miracles, and revelation especially, after the course of nature has been settled. But there is also a strong presumption beforehand against some ordinary facts, which nevertheless the most ordinary proof makes credible. And we know so little of the causes and reasons on which the

present course of nature depends, that we cannot decide as to the improbability of miraculous interpositions—especially when religion gives us reasons for them.

Such is Butler's argument, briefly stated, not so much in defence of miracles as in contravention of the presumption against them. His language seems here even less clear than usual, and his statement scarcely accurate. Mill has pointed out that a confusion is apt to be made between improbability *before the fact*, which may be alleged against the occurrence of any special event (he instances a particular cast of the dice), and improbability *after the fact—i.e.*, an event which contradicts all experience or violates a law of nature, and which therefore needs strong evidence in order to be believed,—to which latter case of improbability a miracle belongs.[1] It would be plainly impossible in these pages to discuss such a large and momentous question, or even to notice the different theories on the subject. But it may be said that if the Creation and the Incarnation be accepted, there can at least be no antecedent probability (which is all that Butler here deals with) against any miracles which may follow.

He feels himself on firmer and more congenial ground when, in the following chapter, he meets the objections alleged against Christianity as a scheme, not by denying that it is open to objections, unless we are content to judge by the analogy of nature, but by asserting our incapacity of judging what was to be expected in a revelation, and 'the credibility, from analogy, that it must contain things appearing liable to objections.' Nature, of which we are assuming throughout that God

[1] See Mill's Logic, vol. ii. p. 169 (sixth edit.)

is the author, and revelation, of which He is asserted to be the author, together make up one great scheme of Providence; and if we are incompetent judges of the one (as we find from experience that we are), it is credible that we should be incompetent judges of the other. The constitution and course of nature we find to be very different from what we should have expected beforehand: so also may be the character and mode of a revelation. 'We scarce know what are improbabilities in the matter we are here considering.' He shows, in a very striking passage, how the natural means by which God instructs us are largely open to this charge of *primâ facie* improbability.

'For instance, would it not have been thought highly improbable that men should have been so much more capable of discovering, even to certainty, the general laws of matter, and the magnitudes, paths, and revolutions of the heavenly bodies, than the occasions and cures of distempers, and many other things in which human life seems so much more nearly concerned than in astronomy? How capricious and irregular a way of information, would it be said, is that of *invention*, by means of which nature instructs us in matters of science, and in many things upon which the affairs of the world greatly depend; that a man should by this faculty be made acquainted with a thing in an instant, when, perhaps, he is thinking of somewhat else, which he has in vain been searching after it many be for years. So likewise the imperfections attending the only method by which nature enables and directs us to communicate our thoughts to each other, are innumerable. Language is, in its very nature, inadequate, ambiguous—liable to infinite abuse, even from negligence, and so liable to it from design, that every man can deceive and betray by it. And to mention but one instance more: that brutes without reason should act in many respects with a sagacity and foresight vastly greater than what

men have in those respects, would be thought impossible. Yet it is certain they do act with such superior foresight—whether it be their own, indeed, is another question.'

He proceeds to show how in other respects there is a strong analogy between the light of nature and the light of revelation. In both, the practical rules of life are plain and obvious; while deeper and more particular knowledge requires exact thought and careful study. The hindrances to both have been of the same kind. The whole scheme of Scripture, admitted to be not as yet understood, must be unfolded by the gradual 'progress of learning and of liberty,' and by individual research. 'For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints as it were dropped us by nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance.'

There is one most important objection which Butler foresees might be made to this part of his argument, and which really applies to the whole argument from the analogy between the teaching of nature and that of revelation, as later objectors have not failed to point out. Butler himself puts it thus:—

'The Scripture represents the world as in a state of ruin, and Christianity as an expedient to recover it in these respects where nature fails; in short, to supply the deficiencies of natural light. Is it credible that so many ages should have been let pass before a revelation of a sort, of so great and so general importance, was known to mankind; and then imparted to so small a part of the world? Is it credible that the supply should be so very deficient, full of obscurity and doubtfulness?

—in short, lie open to all the like objections as the light of nature itself?'

His reply to this is of weight so far as it goes. He argues that men are liable to diseases the remedies for which, though existing in nature, were long unknown, are still known but to few, and to them only as the result of long research and study, and repeated failures, while some are probably still unknown; that they are in many cases misapplied or rejected, and in many ineffectual; and that the same principles of reasoning which would lead us to conclude they must invariably be certain, perfect, and universal, would lead us in like manner to conclude that there should be no occasion for their use, in the existence of any diseases at all. Such reply does not wholly invalidate, though it may lessen, the force of such objections. The objection does and will remain,—that we should *not* expect to find the same difficulties in revelation that we find in nature, but that rather any supernatural communication, given for purpose supposed, ought to explain such difficulties, of involving us in new perplexities; and therethe analogy of the two systems, however n, is no sufficient proof of the Divine origin We may find, perhaps, the real reply would make to such objectors, not on that difficulties in religion may of our trial here, and that our of this world, considered as a lso in the words of his conadily acknowledges' that âns satisfactory,'[1] but

that such is the case with all the problems of life. But to this we shall have to return hereafter. For the present we may note that he cautions us against drawing any such conclusion as that reason is no judge at all of what professes to be revelation, because it is not a competent judge of everything pertaining to it. Reason can and may judge of the morality of a revelation—whether or not it contains anything contradictory to wisdom, justice, and goodness—and no objection has been taken against Scripture on that point, but what applies equally to the constitution of nature; and reason can and must judge of the *evidence* of revelation (on which the truth of Christianity really depends) and the objections made against it, to be dealt with hereafter.

As he had before shown (Part I. chap. VII.) that nature was a scheme imperfectly comprehended, so in his next chapter (IV.) he proceeds to show that Christianity must be regarded under the like reservation. If we look at its mysterious teachings, especially in its great doctrines of redemption and sanctification, it is plain that 'f all purposes of judging or objecting we know as litt it as of the constitution of nature; our ignorance fore, is as much an answer to our objectio the perfection of one as against the perfe other.' Both are carried on by gener gather even from our limited observa us in ignorance of many of these nature; and this renders it at even miraculous interpositions laws of wisdom. To the o scheme on the ground parent tediousness of

clusive. There *is* a mystery; this is his direct answer to Tindal's assertion that 'Christianity is not mysterious;' but the mystery is 'as great in nature as in Christianity.' Butler rises here, as he does in more passages than some of his critics are willing to allow, to an eloquence of which he was chary rather than incapable.

'Thus much is manifest, that the whole natural world and the government of it is a scheme or system,—not a fixed, but a progressive one: a scheme in which the operation of various means takes up a great length of time before the ends they tend to can be attained. The change of seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of a flower, is an instance of this: and so is human life. Thus vegetable bodies and those of animals, though possibly formed at once, yet grow up by degrees to a mature state. And thus rational agents, who animate these latter bodies, are naturally directed to form each his own manners and character, by the gradual gaining of knowledge and experience, and by a long course of action. Our existence is not only successive, as it must be of necessity; but one state of our life and being is appointed by God to be a preparation for another; and [illegible]t, to be the means of attaining to another succeeding one: [illegible]cy to childhood; childhood to youth; youth to mature [illegible]len are impatient, and for precipitating things: but [illegible]r of nature appears deliberate throughout His [illegible]ccomplishing his natural ends by slow successive [illegible]here is a plan of things beforehand laid out.

[illegible]ppositely quotes a passage from Guizot:—
[illegible]e are not confined within narrow limits; [illegible]display to-day the consequences of the [illegible]laid down; He will draw it out in the [illegible]s come; and even according to our [illegible]because it is slow. Providence is [illegible](if I may be allowed the simile) [illegible]er through space; He takes [illegible]ion in Europe,' Lect. I.

which, from the nature of it, requires various systems of means, as well as length of time, in order to the carrying on its several parts into execution. Thus in the daily course of natural providence God operates in the very same manner as in the dispensation of Christianity, making one thing subservient to another, this to somewhat further; and so on through a progressive series of means, which extend, both backward and forward, beyond our utmost view.'

In Chapter V. the author proceeds to defend the Christian doctrine of a Mediator, which has been so often and strongly controverted. Yet, as he argues, there is very much in the analogy of nature that corresponds with the general notion. Our birth, our preservation in infancy, our happiness or misery here, in large degree, depend on the instrumentality of others. He goes further, and by a chain of argument more ingenious, perhaps, than satisfactory, maintains that the notion of mediation, as interposing between sin and its punishment, is at least not inconsistent with what we know of God's moral government here. Punishment—that is, misery—is here t
natural and necessary consequence of certain v
courses: and it may very well be that in th
state punishment follows wickedness in the s
by natural consequence, as we call it. B
that here, in the workings of Providen
consequences of men's actions do n
some provision seems made to prev
remedies provided, and this s
others. Such is the compass
hope, from analogy, that
after the natural conse
according to the gener

some such provision would be made for preventing these consequences from following inevitably and in all cases. Yet there seems no probability that they could be prevented by anything we ourselves could do. We neither understand all the reasons for future punishment, nor all the appointed consequences of vice, and therefore do not know how to set about to avert them. Nor will mere repentance or future well-doing repair the ruin, in many cases, even in this world. 'If, then, the laws of God's general government had been permitted to operate, without any interposition on our behalf, the future punishment, for aught we know to the contrary or have any reason to think, must inevitably have followed, notwithstanding anything we could have done to prevent it.'

Here, then, says Butler, 'revelation comes in;' and while it confirms our fears, and 'supposes the world in a state of ruin,' teaches us at the same time 'that the unknown laws of God's more general government, no less than the particular laws by which we experience He governs us at present, are *compassionate* as well as [illegible]' that pardon is possible, not on our repentance [illegible]ut by the interposition of another—His Son. [illegible]at some length with the whole Christian [illegible]diation; but into this more strictly theo- [illegible]f the treatise it is not necessary for [illegible]leed possible within the limits of [illegible]e should follow him. We may [illegible] to the possible objection, that [illegible]state of degradation, he re- [illegible]is not Christianity which [illegible]nd 'that Scripture does [illegible]ct which is verified

alike by experience and by the confession of heathen moralists; while the objection against vicarious suffering is refuted by the analogy of such suffering in our various experience in the course of natural providence. He warns us once more against the presumption of objections from ignorance. His practical conclusion is in accordance with his usual moderation of statement — 'not to expect to have the like information concerning the Divine conduct as concerning our own duty. . . . The constitution of the world, and God's natural government of the world, is all mystery, as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet under the first He has given men all things pertaining to life, and under the second all things pertaining to godliness.' Precepts of duty are clear—difficulties are speculative.

Two objections are discussed in the next chapter (VI.), which must be read in its entirety in order to do any kind of justice to the cogency of the argument on Butler's great principles, and the force and clearness of the language, which in this case presents none of the ruggedness sometimes justly complained of in the writer's style. The objections are the want of universality in revelation, and the deficiency in the proof of it. To the first he replies that analogy shows us this same apparently partial distribution of gifts in the natural government of the world—health and strength, riches and education; but such disparity in the matter of temporal advantages is held to be no disproof of God's natural government, and no excuse for imprudent management of our temporal affairs. And as we find different orders of creatures endowed with various degrees of capacity, so we might reasonably expect to find creatures of the

same order placed in different situations as regards the advantages of religion. Infinite justice can (and will, as we are assured) deal equitably at the last with all. As to the second objection—deficiency of proof—this may be a part of our intellectual probation, a test of our fairness, earnestness, and seriousness, in dealing with evidence on a matter so important;—a test as needful for the character in some cases as a moral probation is in others.

'Nor does there appear any absurdity in supposing that the speculative difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, may make even the principal part of some persons' trial. For as the chief temptations of the generality of the world are the ordinary motives to injustice or unrestrained pleasure; or to live in the neglect of religion, from that frame of mind which renders many persons almost without feeling as to anything distant, or which is not the object of their senses: so there are other persons without this shallowness of temper—persons of a deeper sense as to what is invisible and future—who not only see, but have a general practical feeling, that what is to come will be present, and that things are not less real for their not being the objects of sense; and who, from their natural constitution of body and temper, and from their external condition, may have small temptations to behave ill, small difficulty in behaving well, in the common course of life.'

Even doubt implies some evidence; and doubtful evidence, we find from experience, serves frequently as our probation in temporal matters. Nay, 'after we have judged the very best we can, the evidence on which we must act, if we will live and act at all, is perpetually doubtful to a very high degree.'

(Chap. VII.) It is not necessary to follow the author

into his brief defence of what he calls 'the particular evidence for Christianity'—the positive evidence founded chiefly on the miracles and on the fulfilment of prophecy. These large subjects have been questioned and discussed in our own days with greater interest, and perhaps greater ability, than even in Butler's, and, it may be said, in a keener spirit of inquiry, and with less prejudice; and Butler's ground of defence has been more fully occupied by modern writers, to whom the student of theology would more profitably refer. That 'gradual progress of learning and of liberty'[1]—*i.e.*, freedom of thought—which Butler's large and candid mind foresaw in the future, has already widened the field of inquiry,—has raised new forms of not irreverent scepticism, and established new lines of defence. It is enough to notice how he insists forcibly on the value (apt to be ignored by undisciplined minds in all judicial inquiries) of circumstantial evidence—'often as convincing as that which is the most express and direct;' and of cumulative proof, the importance of which is sometimes equally lost sight of—'for probable proofs, by being added, not only increase the evidence, but multiply it.' Yet he is not tempted, either by the zeal of a controversialist or by his own undoubted convictions, to press upon his readers more than the very moderate conclusion which he claims to have here established—that the objections may weaken the evidence, but do not therefore destroy it, and that the positive evidence, taken as a whole, must be admitted to have at least 'great weight,' and to deserve serious attention—'instead of that cursory thought of them with which we are familiarised.' He

[1] Chap. iii. See p. 143.

recognises, like a cool and able general, the vulnerable points of a position which he, nevertheless, believes to be tenable: 'Ridicule—unanswerable ridicule—may be applied to show the argument from analogy in a disadvantageous light: yet there can be no question but that it is a real one.' He has therefore made out his claim for serious inquiry. He reminds his readers that doubt as to the truth of anything is by no means the same (though many appear to think so) as being certain of its falsehood. That 'overbearing evidence' which men demand for Christianity is neither sought nor afforded for our decisions on some of the weightiest matters of common life. And he recurs to the practical consideration suggested in his opening chapter, that where 'a mistake on the one side is much more dangerous than a mistake on the other,' this becomes of the highest moment, as in our temporal affairs, in determining how we are to act.

For, as he says in his concluding chapter, 'religion is a practical thing.' Those who insist on having all difficulties cleared should remember that this may be the same thing as claiming to comprehend the Divine nature, and the eternal counsels of the Deity. 'The design of this treatise is not to vindicate the honour of God, but to show the obligations of man: not to justify His providence, but to show what belongs to us to do.' To those who would complain that his argument leaves the mind after all in a very unsatisfied state, he admits with an almost cynical candour that it is 'by no means satisfactory—very far indeed from it,'—if by 'not satisfactory' they mean 'not being what they wish it;' for 'satisfaction, in this sense, does not

belong to such a creature as man.' The question for a reasonable man to consider is not, 'Whether the evidence of religion be satisfactory,' but 'Whether the evidence for a course of action be such as, taking in all circumstances, makes the faculty within us, which is the guide and judge of conduct, determine that course of action to be prudent.'

CHAPTER VIII.

MODERN CRITICISMS.

As was to be expected, the cautious and sober line of argument pursued by Butler in his 'Analogy,' the very care which he has taken to assume nothing in his premises which would not be generally admitted by those to whom he addressed himself, and to content himself with a conclusion which amounted at best to a moral and not a mathematical demonstration, has drawn upon him attacks more or less able from various quarters,—alike from those who have been keen to detect any weakness in the alleged proofs of revelation, and from those who, like himself, have been earnest apologists for Christianity. The insufficiency of his argument, and the unsatisfactory nature of his conclusion, which the first-mentioned class of objectors have been eager to expose, the others have lamented as an injury done to a grand cause by a weak defence. He was accused even by some of his contemporaries as having been 'a little too little vigorous,' and they 'wished he would have spoken more earnestly.' But from the other side no opponent of any weight came forward in his own day, and none whom he felt called upon to answer. Indeed

the only publication of his which seems to have drawn forth any direct reply is the Charge to his clergy, delivered the year before his death, against which Blackburne's pamphlet, already mentioned, was levelled,[1] if we except some 'Remarks' on the sixth chapter of the 'Analogy,' published in 1737 under the signature of 'Philanthropos' (said to be by a Rev. Mr Bott), which were quite undeserving of any notice, and obtained none; and a brief 'Vindication of Locke's views of Personal Identity against the Mistakes of Dr Butler,' by Mr Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham, who afterwards became a Methodist. For more than a century the 'Analogy' enjoyed, not only amongst English Churchmen, but among Christian controversialists generally, an unchallenged reputation as one of the best manuals upon the evidence of revelation. Southey, indeed, had claimed for its author, in the inscription on his monument in Bristol Cathedral, the merit of having constructed an 'irrefragable proof' of the Christian revelation: a claim which he himself would surely not have made, because such proof was what he never attempted. He only claimed to show that the current objections and difficulties supplied no proof at all to the contrary. But it was at least tacitly admitted that such proof as he had adduced from his own special process of reasoning was of undeniable and important weight.

Murmurs of dissent, however, had been heard from time to time. Pitt is reported to have said, in conversation with Wilberforce, that the book 'had raised in his mind more doubts than it answered.'[2] Sir James Mackintosh's estimate of its value is somewhat

[1] See p. 23, *note.* [2] Life of W. Wilberforce, p. 41.

misrepresented in a remark attributed to him by his biographer. He is reported as having said, 'Butler's "Analogy" is not his best work; it is not philosophical, but religious; the whole of it is contained in a single passage of Quintilian, which he had the honesty to give as the motto to his work.' Here there is, in the first place, an evident confusion between the motto from Quintilian and the quotation from Origen, which proves the conversation to have been very incorrectly recorded; while the supposed criticism is contradicted, as Dr Fitzgerald has shown,[1] by the words which Mackintosh has himself deliberately published: 'Butler's great work, though only a commentary on the singularly original and pregnant passage of "Origen," which is so honestly prefixed to it as a motto, is, notwithstanding, the most original and profound work extant in any language on the philosophy of religion.'

But the more formidable attacks upon Butler have been reserved for our own days, and have proceeded chiefly from those who, though they would range themselves with the author of the 'Analogy' as to the main object which he had in view, differ from him as to the value of the line of defence which he has adopted. Dr Martineau, in his 'Studies of Christianity,' regards the 'Analogy' as 'having furnished, with a design directly contrary, one of the most terrible of the persuasives to atheism that has ever been produced;' apparently on the ground that it is possible, by substituting the idea of 'Nature' for the idea of God, to turn the whole course of Butler's argument in that direction. Without going nearly so far as this sweeping assertion, Mr

[1] Fitzgerald's Analogy, preface, p. xlix.

Maurice, Mr Matthew Arnold, and Mr Goldwin Smith have entered their several protests against the tendency of Butler's religious philosophy. Mr Maurice has said that as the argument of the 'Analogy' is commonly interpreted, it 'assumes all moral principles to depend on probable evidence;' he regards the author as entertaining 'strong presumptions in favour of a moral constitution of man, and nothing more;' and on this general ground he deplores the scepticism of such a principle 'as placing' the moral law upon a basis of uncertainty.' He also objects against his system of ethics that it appeals too often to lower motives—to that 'fear of consequences' which Shaftesbury had sought to eliminate from a pure and disinterested morality. He sees in his Sermons 'evident marks of their having been written by a very young man;' which, however true as to literal fact, is certainly a new discovery so far as any internal evidence is concerned, and nothing in Butler's later writings leads to the conclusion that he had in any way changed his views. The ethics of the 'Analogy' are those of the Sermons.

Perhaps Butler has scarcely yet been sufficiently appreciated as the champion of 'Human Nature.' He casts to the winds, not in words exactly, but by implication in almost the whole course of his argument, that doctrine of its total depravity which was held, and which he knew to be held, by some of the best men of his day, with whom on other grounds he would have gladly made common cause. All his reasoning, all his system of the conscience of man ruling, on the whole, with an authority not seldom resisted and disputed but intrinsically legitimate, over the passions and affections, rests

on the supposition that man still retains the framework of the nature in which he was made. He does not put out of sight his belief in a fall from what might have been originally perfection: 'there are natural appearances of our being in a state of degradation.' He sees, with his usual acuteness, that the fact of our having some propensions which may be gratified in contradiction of moral principle, and under some circumstances *can* only be so gratified, may lead to such a fall from original uprightness. But not only does he recognise our natural affections as so many helps, not hindrances, to our due cultivation of goodwill to men, and our following the moral rule within us, but he holds that even our passions (using the word in its lower sense) may contribute to the same end if kept duly under control. 'No passion that God has endowed us with can be in itself evil.' Anger, in man's moral constitution, like pain in the natural world, is but an instance of the wisdom and goodness of Him who made us. How bold and wise are these words!—

'We should learn to be cautious lest we charge God foolishly, by ascribing that to Him, or to the nature He has given us, which is owing wholly to our own abuse of it. Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it; but human nature, considered as the Divine workmanship, should, methinks, be considered as sacred; for "in the image of God made He man."'[1]

His views have been called pessimist, and they may bear that character as contrasted with the optimism of his favourite Shaftesbury—'the religion of sunshine,'

[1] Sermon viii., *ad fin.*

as it has been not inaptly termed; his view of human life has been called dark and gloomy, the reflex of a melancholy temperament; and certainly he takes serious note of all the shadows in the picture. But strong and deep is his conviction, which he never hesitates to express, that in our nature, considered as a system, there is that which tends to righteousness; that 'poverty and disgrace, tortures and death, are not so contrary to it as injustice;' that man 'hath the rule of right within him: what is wanting is that he honestly attend to it.' It is a remarkable exemplification of the effect which an able and honest writer has upon minds differently constituted from his own, that some of his warmest admirers have been men brought up in quite a different school of theology, like Chalmers and others, who sometimes think it necessary to qualify and explain some of his statements on this point, but always with deference and respect.

And here lies Butler's great claim to the attention of all thoughtful readers, even such as may take exception to some of the steps in his argument, and not yield a perfect assent to all his conclusions. His aim throughout is to impress upon us the obligations of duty. He left it for others to busy themselves with the question of the immutability of the idea of right—whether the laws of morality were constant or progressive. His purpose was to inquire into their practical influence upon life—the province of that moral sense of which, whatever its origin, we have a distinct personal consciousness, and from which arises the obligation to do the right and avoid the wrong. When, in the opening of his sermon on Human Ignorance, he speaks of the writings of

Solomon—'so very much taken up with reflections on human nature and human life'—in which the wise author laments the labour and weariness of his search after wisdom,—how he had found as the result of it only 'sorrow, perplexity, and a sense of his necessary ignorance,'—he comes to the conclusion that 'knowledge is not our happiness,' but that the honest performance of duty is: and that 'he who should find out one rule to assist us in *this* work, would deserve infinitely better of mankind than all the improvers of other knowledge put together.'

A great question, affecting what may be called the ethics of religion, has arisen with regard to a passage in the 'Analogy' which seems to imply that a positive precept, resting on Divine authority, may change the moral quality of an action. 'There are some particular precepts in Scripture,' says Butler, 'given to particular persons, requiring actions which would be immoral and vicious were it not for such precepts.'[1] The difficulty, and the objections founded upon it, are neither imaginary, nor in any way peculiar to Butler's days: we have here only to consider his mode of dealing with them. And it will probably be confessed by his most sincere admirers that he has rather hurried over this question than examined it as thoroughly as its importance demanded. Admitting that in certain cases (which will at once occur to every reader's mind) the act commanded 'must have appeared and *really been*' unjust or immoral prior to the precept, he proceeds to say,—'It is easy to see that all these are of such a kind that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the

[1] Part II. chap. iii.

action; which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality.' And he goes on to explain why he considers that they are not so.

'If it were commanded to cultivate the principles and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty,—the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action in any of these instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action,—for instance, taking away the property or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God: when this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either; and when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either. And though a course of external acts, which without command would be immoral, must make an immoral habit; yet a few detached commands have no such natural tendency. I thought proper to say thus much of the few Scripture precepts which require, not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them. But to me there seems no difficulty at all in these precepts, but what arises from their being offences—*i.e.*, from their being liable to be perverted, as indeed they are, by wicked designing men to serve the most horrid purposes, and perhaps to mislead the weak and enthusiastic.'[1]

Few will agree with the author that this is 'easy to see,' or that in such precepts there seems 'no difficulty at all;' or that it is possible to reconcile with the great theory of habits already laid down in this treatise the assertion that 'a few detached commands,' resulting in immoral actions, have no tendency to create an immoral

[1] Analogy, Part II. chap. iii.

habit. He is verging here far too closely on a doctrine he would surely have repudiated as strongly as Cudworth had done in the previous generation,—the doctrine of Ockham and Gerson, and in a modified form of Warburton and Paley,—that all morality was founded on the absolute will of God—'that what God willed was and must be good, even if He willed us to hate Him.' The question how far the Divine attributes were or were not identical in kind with those of humanity, and how far, therefore, human reason was capable of judging at all of the precepts or the acts of the Deity, had been keenly discussed before the appearance of Butler's work; and Clarke, for one, had insisted that unless we were to understand the Divine morality as identical with our own moral consciousness, it was only 'an unmeaning phrase.' Nor does Butler much mend his position by the suggestion that precepts which now seem to us immoral might be found to bear another character if we knew all the reasons for them. It is true that, when we assert the identity of Divine with human justice, we have to remember that the one moves in an infinite, the other in a finite sphere; but if our moral sense revolts against any one positive precept enjoined upon us,—though it be owing to our limited knowledge,—how can it be a safe guide to us in other cases? Attention has been directed afresh to this argument of Butler's, owing to its adoption by the late Dean Mansel in his Bampton Lecture for 1858, in which he lays down the proposition that while there is undoubtedly an 'absolute morality' in the abstract, based upon, or rather identical with, the eternal nature of God, there is also a relative morality in the concrete, with which

in practice we have to do. These are the lecturer's words: 'As all human morality is manifested in this form, the conclusion seems unavoidable that human morality, even in its highest elevation, is not identical with, nor adequate to measure, the absolute morality of God.'[1] In quoting with approval the passage from the 'Analogy' which has been given above, he calls such exceptional instances of precepts which contradict, or seem to contradict, our ideas of justice or morality, 'temporary suspensions of the laws of obligation,' and compares them with the 'corresponding suspension of the laws of natural phenomena which constitute our ordinary conception of a miracle.' And he says again: 'We are not justified in regarding the occasional suspension of human duties by the same authority which enacted them, as a violation of the immutable principles of morality itself.'[2]

It is not surprising that such teaching from such a quarter should have produced strong remonstrances. It is not necessary to go so far as Mr Goldwin Smith, when he says (though here he does little more than repeat the protest of Cudworth) that to argue on such doctrine consistently, 'we must finally recur to absolute atheism.' But his language seems hardly too strong when he characterises such arguments as 'the dreadful figment of two moralities,' and says that without the grand doctrine of Clarke as to the identity of human and Divine justice, it seems to him 'that history and the whole moral world would be reduced to chaos.' Butler's argument, such as it is, appears to have been borrowed from Waterland, and could hardly,

[1] Bampton Lecture, p. 206. [2] Ibid., pp. 244, 210.

one would think, have satisfied his own mind. It is at least remarkable that a writer who was not usually sparing of words, and who not unfrequently puts his reasoning into two or three different forms in order to press it home, should have dismissed this notoriously difficult question in a few brief sentences. The truth is, that great as Butler is, so long as he is on his own chosen ground, he cannot be said to rise above the level of ordinary apologists when he comes to deal with the historical evidences of Christianity, or with the special difficulties of revelation. When he attempts the defence of miracles or prophecy, or this special question of Old Testament morality, the modern student feels at once that these subjects have been treated by abler hands. Butler's reading was probably not very wide; and, notwithstanding his protest against the tyranny of established opinions, he may have found himself hampered, almost unconsciously, in his position, by what were held to be orthodox views, and may have had a wholesome dread of discrediting his work by incurring the charge of neology. On this particular question of the apparent contradiction between the laws of morality and certain isolated acts commanded or sanctioned in the historical books of Scripture, we have only to turn to the recent publication of Dr Mozley to see how this kind of theological criticism has advanced and widened since Butler's day.[1]

He has been charged with lacking spirituality,—with losing sight of the essence of religion in the cold and unimpassioned examination of its credentials. It must be remembered that the whole nature of his argument,

[1] See Mozley's 'Ruling Ideas in Early Ages.'

the character of those to whom he addresses it, and the conclusion which alone he sets himself to prove, demanded that he should not only reject as far as possible the terminology of the spiritual teacher, but should forbear, or at least be sparing of, the appeal to Scripture authority or Christian teaching. More than once—even in his Sermons—we can see that he puts a constraint upon himself in this particular. Speaking of the office of conscience in this our present state, he says that 'it naturally, and of course, goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own.'[1] But here at once he checks himself: 'this part of the office of conscience it is beyond his present design explicitly to consider,' because he is dealing only with the moral nature of man. So, again, in his sermon on 'Love of our Neighbour,' the view which God will take of their choice, who find their happiness in promoting that of others, is 'a consideration not formally to be insisted on here;' and in the 'Analogy' he maintains this reserve throughout. Throughout the Sermons also, as in his later work, he uses the terms 'virtue' and 'vice' in the place of their theological equivalents, 'righteousness' and 'sin.' But in thus treating his subject as a moralist rather than a divine, he is not sinking religion in philosophy, but bringing to religion the support of philosophy, which he had found so often arrayed against it.

[1] Sermon II., On Human Nature.

CHAPTER IX.

STYLE.

BUTLER'S style has been generally charged, even by some of his warmest admirers, with roughness and obscurity. Sir James Mackintosh spoke of him as 'one of the best thinkers and worst writers, being in the latter particular dark and obscure.' 'His words,' says Mr Maurice, 'often become feeble and contradictory, because he cannot write what is struggling within him.' Mr Bagehot has complacently styled him 'a poor writer,' and speaks of his 'feeble words and halting sentences;' paying him at the same time the compliment of comparing him with Aristotle as 'finding it hard to make his meaning clear.' It is possible that the Greek philosopher might have pleaded, as Butler might, that before the meaning of any ethical or metaphysical treatise can be clear to the reader, the reader must have a fair previous acquaintance with the subject-matter of which it treats, and of the terms previously employed in its discussion. The Ethics of Aristotle are almost incomprehensible to the student who has no previous acquaintance with Plato: we should have found very much new

light thrown upon them had we been present at the word-fencing in the schools at Athens; and the modest student will do well to suspect that many of the difficulties which remain may arise, not so much from any difficulty which Aristotle found in expressing himself, as from his own imperfect knowledge of Greek,—to say nothing of possible inaccuracies in the copies of written lectures. It must be admitted that Butler's style is in many places dry and hard. He eschewed ornament, and carefully avoided anything like rhetoric. It has been said that he had no poetry in his composition, which is perhaps too much to assert of one who had taken to verse-writing in his youth; but he certainly expresses great dread of imagination, as 'the author of all error,' 'that forward delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere.'[1] It was also his special purpose to avoid so far as possible any of the terms currently employed in dogmatic theology: to assume no theory which would be questioned by the sceptics of his day, and to employ no language which might seem to involve the holding of such theory on his own part. Consequently, in his carefulness to eschew any mode of expression which might lay him open to the charge of appearing to beg the question, he sometimes has recourse to a circuitous phraseology which bears the appearance of indistinctness of thought. Thus, in the first chapter of the 'Analogy,' he is so careful to keep clear of any theory as to the soul, and to discuss the question of a future life on purely natural grounds, that he avoids the use of the word 'soul' altogether, and contents himself with such awkward phrases as 'living powers,' and

[1] Analogy, Part I. chap. i.

'faculties of perception and action.'[1] He confesses himself that there are certain principles — those, for instance, of the liberty of the will and of moral fitness —which have been so generally admitted that 'moralists, ancients as well as moderns, have formed their language upon it;' 'and probably,' he adds, 'it may appear in mine, though I have endeavoured to avoid it, and in order to avoid it, have sometimes been obliged to express myself in a manner which will appear strange to such as do not observe the reason for it.'[2] He was very conscious that his style would not be found popular or attractive. Of this, indeed, he thought the nature of the subject would scarcely admit. 'It is very unallowable for a work of imagination or entertainment not to be of easy comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a work of another kind, where a man is not to form or accommodate, but to state things as he finds them.' Such obscurity as we may find did not at least arise from negligence, or from his not fully recognising the duty of every writer to be as clear as the nature of his subject would permit.

'Confusion and perplexity in writing is indeed without excuse; because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through what he is about: and it is unpardonable for a man to lay his thoughts before others when he is conscious that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the matter before him stands. It is coming abroad in disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at home.'

Many will perhaps think that, after all, Butler is at

[1] See Hampden's Philosoph. Evidences of Christianity, pref., p. x.
[2] Analogy, Part II. chap. viii.

least as intelligible as some modern writers upon ethics; and that his argument, unattractive as it often is in form, contrasts not unfavourably with the haziness of thought which we find clothed in more polished sentences and a more copious ethical vocabulary. He is said to have sought his friend Secker's help in preparing his works for the press, with an especial view to simplifying the construction of his sentences; but the style of the two writers is so very dissimilar that they probably received but few touches from Secker's hand. That he took some pains in correcting his own writings is evident from a comparison of the second with the first edition of his Sermons. He was, however, somewhat impatient of careless readers; and those who will be at the trouble to read the following passage from his preface to the second edition, will hardly be inclined to question, in this case, either the lucidity of his English diction or the keen polish of his satire:—

'The great number of books and papers of amusement which, of one kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with and humour, this idle way of reading and considering things. By this means, time even in solitude is happily got rid of, without the pain of attention: neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleness—one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less thought—than great part of that which is spent in reading.

'Thus people habituate themselves to let things pass through their minds, as one may speak, rather than to think of them. Thus by use they become satisfied merely with seeing what is said, without going any further. Review and attention, and even forming a judgment, becomes fatigue; and to lay anything before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their way.

'There are also persons, and there are at least more of them than have a right to claim such superiority, who take for granted that they are acquainted with everything; and that no subject, if treated in the manner it should be, can be treated in any manner but what is familiar and easy to them.'

Some allowance has also to be made for the somewhat affected phraseology (as it seems to us) of the days in which he wrote, and the use of many words in a different sense from that now commonly attached to them.[1] If Butler be obscure to the modern reader, he is very much less so than many of his immediate predecessors. The punctuation, too, will be often found rather to mislead than to assist the reader; for punctuation was used (or misused) in the strangest manner by the writers and printers of Butler's day, and modern editors have done very little to improve it.[2]

Butler had also to contend with a difficulty common to the earlier English writers on ethics and metaphysics, as well as to the Latin, that there was as yet no recognised set of terms to express the several ideas under discussion; and he often writes under an evident consciousness that such words as he can find to use do not define his idea sufficiently. In ethics, he says, 'ideas

[1] *E.g.*, His frequent use of 'however,' where we should now say 'in any case;' 'to be sure' for 'assuredly;' 'sensible' in the double meaning of 'capable of happiness or misery' and 'an object of sense;' 'uneasy' for 'not easy;' 'indifferent' (of conversation) in the sense of 'harmless,' &c. A favourite phrase of his, that a quality 'is in a very low degree,' has in one passage (Serm. vi.) led most of his editors sadly astray in their attempts at punctuation.

[2] An example and a warning of how punctuation may be used so as to increase a reader's difficulties may be found in Alford's edition of Donne's works (1839), and in the posthumous edition of Frederick Robertson's Sermons, 1855.

are never in themselves determinate, but become so by the train of reasoning and the place they stand in; since it is impossible words can always stand for the same ideas even in the same author, much less in different ones.' He has himself remarked, in the concluding chapter of the 'Analogy,' that 'the perplexities in which subjects themselves are involved are heightened by the deficiencies and the abuse of words.'

Perhaps the most serious and the best-founded objection which has been brought against his style is that it is wanting in persuasiveness. He pays little attention to what the Latin rhetoricians called the 'conciliation' of his readers. He has none of the unfairness and little of the bitterness of the controversialist; but he is hard and unsympathetic. He speaks as if from a vantage-ground, with something of a high contempt for the shallowness of the opinions he is confuting. No doubt there was much in the tone of the scepticism of his day which was especially repulsive to one who had, even from his boyhood, made the problems of theology and metaphysics matter of earnest and serious study: anything like levity on such a subject jarred on the solemn questionings of his own mind. He never conceals the feeling that he has to deal with a class of opponents who are not really, like himself, seekers after truth. This feeling colours the language of his 'Advertisement,' already quoted;[1] and he recurs to it afterwards:—

'It is much more easy, and more falls in with the negligence, presumption, and wilfulness of the generality, to determine at once with a decisive air,—there is nothing in it.

[1] P. 101.

The prejudices arising from that absolute contempt and scorn with which this evidence is treated in the world, I do not mention. For what indeed can be said to persons who are weak enough in their understandings to think this any presumption against it; or, if they do not, are yet weak enough in their temper to be influenced by such prejudices upon such a subject?'

The same tone occurs repeatedly at various stages of his argument. Mr Hunt thinks that there was one class of objectors on whom the author of the 'Analogy' 'could only have had pity'—those 'who treated not only Christianity with contempt, but everything which required serious attention.'[1] Whatever pity Butler might have felt, it would be difficult to find the expression of it in his language. He speaks with a curt severity of 'the objections of such as can judge without thinking, and of such as can censure without judging:' and has little patience with those 'who reject Christianity with a scorn proportionate to their inattention.' Even to the general reader he seems at times to throw down his arguments like a challenge. Mr Arnold has noticed the cold judicial tone in which, after representing the difficulties in the evidence of religion as perhaps intended for men's trial, he adds—'By this means they have been put into a state of probation; let them behave as they will in it.' We find something very similar in the peroration of his sermon on Balaam.

'Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be: why then should we desire to be deceived? As we are reasonable creatures and have any regard to ourselves, we ought to lay these things

[1] History of Religious Thought, vol. iii. p. 129.

plainly and honestly before our mind: and upon this, act as you please, as you think most fit; make that choice and prefer that course of life which you can justify to yourself, and which sits most easy upon your own mind.'

He might perhaps have justified himself in this by an appeal to the many warnings in Scripture itself, whose note is—'Whether they will hear or whether they will forbear.' And there is no lack of calm impressive earnestness in such appeal as the following, full of practical wisdom as it must be allowed to be:—

'If there are any persons who never set themselves heartily and in earnest to be informed in religion,—if there are any who secretly wish it may not prove true, and are less attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and more to objections than to what is said in answer to them,—these persons will scarce be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true, and capable of being ever so fully proved. If any accustom themselves to consider this subject usually in the way of mirth and sport,—if they attend to forms and representations, and inadequate manners of expression, instead of the real things intended by them (for signs often can be no more than inadequately expressive of the things signified); or if they substitute human errors in the room of Divine truth,—why may not all, or any of these things, hinder some men from seeing that evidence, which really is seen by others; as a like turn of mind, with respect to matters of common speculation and practice, does, we find by experience, hinder them from attaining that knowledge and right understanding in matters of common speculation and practice, which more fair and attentive minds attain to? And the effect will be the same, whether their neglect of seriously considering the evidence of religion, and their indirect behaviour with regard to it, proceed from mere carelessness, or from the grosser vices; or whether it be owing to this, that forms and figura-

tive manners of expression, as well as errors, administer occasions of ridicule, when the things intended, and the truth itself, would not. Men may indulge a ludicrous turn so far as to lose all sense of conduct and prudence in worldly affairs, and even, as it seems, to impair their faculty of reason. And in general, levity, carelessness, passion, and prejudice, *do* hinder us from being rightly informed, with respect to common things: and they *may*, in like manner, and perhaps in some further providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects—may hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is.'

It is very much to the credit also of Butler's honesty and moderation, that in spite of the tone of something like contempt for the arguments, or want of arguments, of the objectors to whom he addresses himself, he never imputes to them any moral obliquity. It was very easy to say, as many of the writers on Christian evidences did, that unbelief was a sin: that a dislike to the precepts of Christian morality lay at the root of Deism. It is a favourite assertion with some of our modern divines. It is easily said, and not altogether unnatural to assert; because, no doubt, to many natures the release from religious obligation is nothing less than the letting loose of the appetites and passions. But this is no more invariably the case than is the converse,—that a real conviction of the religious and moral obligation invariably produces a moral life. From the use of this commonplace weapon against his adversary Butler's good sense and love of fair dealing happily preserved him.

If he was wanting in some of the qualifications of the professional advocate,—the suasiveness which carries the jury or the audience with him, as we say—the allowance for their prejudices and weaknesses, the ap-

peals to their better sense, or the professions of respect for their judgment, which go far to make them think that the verdict for which so sensible a speaker asks must be the right one,—he is strong in a point which all authorities, from Aristotle downwards, have laid down as an essential requisite in one who would persuade men—the creating in the minds of those whom he addresses an impression of his own high moral integrity, and earnestness of purpose. In this Butler stands far above the reach of cavil. Objections against both his matter and his manner have been many and various: some have charged him with coldness, and others with enthusiasm. Mr Stephen says he is 'no philosopher,' while Mr Arnold tells us he is 'a better moralist than theologian' — with that happy discrepancy of able criticism which is the solace of the criticised: but both, —and in this they do but express the universal judgment—are ungrudging in their admiration of his candour and his honesty, his moderation and forbearance. Philosopher or no philosopher, theologian or no theologian, we feel throughout that we are following one who, in more than profession, made 'the search after truth the business of his life;'[1] who could sympathise with honest doubt because he probably had felt it; and who wrote, as he had acted, under the guiding of the Conscience whose rightful supremacy he vindicated in our common nature.

[1] Fourth Letter to Clarke.

NOTE.

THE best edition of Butler's complete Works is that in 2 vols. 8vo, Oxford, 1849. Separately, the most useful edition of the 'Analogy' is that with Preface and Notes by Dr W. Fitzgerald, now Bishop of Killaloe (Lond. 1860); and of the Sermons, that with Notes by the Rev. R. Carmichael (Lond. 1856), and those by Dr Whewell and Dr Angus.

The following works, to some of which these pages are much indebted, will be found useful in the study of Butler:—

'Essay on the Philosophical Evidence of Christianity,' by R. D. Hampden, D.D. (Lond. 1827.)

Dr T. Chalmers's Bridgewater Treatise (1834), 'On the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man.' (Also contained in Vols. I. and II. of his collected works.)

'Lectures on Butler's Analogy,' by Sir Joseph Napier. (1864.)

'Essays on the Progress of Ethical Philosophy,' by Sir J. Mackintosh. (Edinb. 1872.)

'The Conscience: Lectures on Casuistry,' by J. F. D. Maurice. (Lond. 1872.)

'Bishop Butler and his Critics:' Two Lectures, by J. R. I. Eaton, M.A. (Oxf. 1877.)

Notices and criticisms of Butler's philosophy will also be found in Hunt's 'History of Religious Thought in England;' Lecky's 'History of European Morals;' Bain's 'Mental and Moral Science;' F. D. Maurice's 'Moral and Philosophical Philosophy' (Lond. 1872); Essay on the 'Tendencies of Religious Thought in England, 1688-1750,' by the Rector of Lincoln College, Oxford, in 'Essays and Reviews;' Leslie Stephen's 'History of English Thought in the Eighteenth Century;' and the Article "Butler" in the 'Encyclopædia Britannica.' Mr Goldwin Smith's 'Rational Religion,' with Dean Mansel's 'Letter' in reply, and Mr M. Arnold's two articles on "Bishop Butler and the Zeit-Geist," in the 'Contemporary Review,' 1876, may also be consulted with advantage.

END OF BUTLER.

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